

54th OHS National Convention July 5–10, 2009, Cleveland, Ohio

Frank Rippl

I arrived in Cleveland on July 5th with a mixture of emotions. I was glad to revisit a city I enjoyed many years ago when I took a summer course in Orff Schulwerk at Case Western Reserve University, but I was in a bit of a funk after my flight that was supposed to leave the day before was canceled. United's friendly skies were shut down by a computer glitch. But I finally found myself in this beautiful city with its elegant buildings on Lake Erie. I give extra snaps to any city that has light rail service from its airport to the center of downtown. At the Marriott, I had a corner room with lots of windows and a great view of the famous Terminal Tower. I felt better. I was reminded of the quote our brochure had printed from an ad published by Cleveland organbuilder Walter Holtkamp, Sr. (1894–1962): "A town of good organs, a profitable place to visit." After I registered, I looked over the 284-page convention *Atlas*, which contained extraordinary amounts of information on the organs, venues, and towns we were to visit. It began with a fascinating monograph by Stephen Pintel entitled "The Early Organ Culture of Cleveland," loads of colorful pictures, and ads (including a reprinted one from long ago that featured Jesse Crawford promoting "Barbasol").

Pre-convention concert

After greeting lots of old OHS friends, I boarded a bus for Trinity Episcopal Cathedral and a pre-convention event. The cathedral grew out of Cleveland's oldest congregation, Trinity Church, founded in 1816. They built Cleveland's first church in 1829. The present Indiana limestone building, designed by Cleveland architect Charles F. Schweinfurth in the English perpendicular Gothic design, was completed in 1907, and contains several bits of historic beauty: a 1457 cross beam from Southwark Cathedral, London, some windows from the 14th and 15th centuries as well as some by Tiffany, plus Oberammergau carvings. If that weren't enough, they have **two organs by Dirk Flentrop**: a 2-manual, 13-stop organ from 1976 in the choir, and the 1977 3-manual, 39-stop instrument in a small gallery above the rear entrance. **Horst Buchholz**, cathedral organist, greeted us, as did **Michael Barone**, who would serve as an unofficial host throughout the week. He introduced convention chairperson **Joseph McCabe**, half of his former self. His weight loss was the envy of all of us. We then sang "O Beautiful for Spacious Skies," it being July 5.



Flentrop, 1977, Trinity Episcopal Cathedral, Cleveland

Both organs were used—Dr. Buchholz played the smaller choir organ and **Alison Luedecke** the larger organ at the other end of the building. Most of the concert



Flentrop, 1976, Trinity Episcopal Cathedral, Cleveland

was played by Dr. Luedecke, who began with a spirited reading of Bruhns's well-known *Praeludium in E minor*—a great demonstration piece. Then came Pachelbel's *Variations on "Freu dich sehr, o meine Seele,"* featuring one of the organ's lovely cornets, and the clear 4' flutes. Next was the Bach/Vivaldi *Concerto in A Minor*, listed in the program as *Prelude and Fugue in A Minor*—J. S. Bach. This cheery music was just right for an opening concert of the convention and was well suited to the instrument at hand. She next played *Irish Jig for the Feet* by Mary Beth Bennett, a charmer of a piece—airy and graceful. Buchholz and Luedecke then added some pieces by Melchior Franck and Hermann Schein, using both organs to show off stops we had not heard—kromhoorns and the like. Luedecke ended with the *Doppel Fugue über "Heil dir im Siegeskranz"* (God Save the King) by John Knowles Paine. She played it well—untangling both fugue subjects with ease.

Opening concert

The official opening concert was that evening at the Cleveland Masonic and Performance Arts Center, with a recital by **Peter Richard Conte** on the 4-manual, 41-rank **Austin organ, Opus 823**, from 1919. The building is an enormous weathered brick structure, and the large auditorium has steep stadium seating. Its former elegance is somewhat faded, but the acoustics are good and the room is still used for recordings by the Cleveland Orchestra. To the left of the stage is a 4-manual Wurlitzer console awaiting its pipes; work is ongoing. The Austin console is in a somewhat cramped nest above and to the right of the stage; the pipes are in a chamber above the console. A large movie screen center stage projected a close-up of Conte's hands. Technical difficulties with the camera or the projector provided more distraction than necessary, but it was still good fun to see those famous hands at work. This recital was both the closing concert of the ATOS convention and the opening concert of the OHS convention—it was a treat to share a common bond. There were a surprisingly large number of people present who belonged to neither organization.

The concert was vintage Conte. He began with his own transcription of Bernstein's *Overture to Candide*, then an assured and strong reading of Guilmant's *Marche Religieuse*, op. 15, no. 2, and two transcriptions from Widor's *Bach's Memento: Pastorale*, in which we heard the beautiful Clarinet and Oboe stops, and *Mattheus-Final*. Conte then played his own transcription of Fritz Kreisler's *Variations on a Theme of Arcangelo Corelli*. His right hand bounced effortlessly between Swell and Choir without missing a beat—when you are used to

the six-manual Wanamaker console, a four-manual instrument must be mere child's play.

Robert Elmore's *Fantasy on Nursery Tunes* followed, a charming piece, great for introducing the organ to children—if they still know the old nursery tunes! Conte brought the program to a close with the *Final* by Franck. Throughout the evening he spoke to his large audience with humor and grace. It was a brilliant and virtuoso performance.

Monday, 6 July 2009

After a pleasant drive out in the green countryside on a sunny, cloudless morning, we arrived at St. Martin of Tours Roman Catholic Church in Valley City, Ohio, to hear **Andrew Scanlon** demonstrate the tonally intact **1881 Odenbrett & Abler organ**, built in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The 2-manual, 19-stop organ stands in the rear balcony of the church, which dates from 1861, and is now used as a chapel for a larger structure next door, built in 2002. A handsome organ, with polished tin façade and butternut case, it is believed to be the last extant instrument by this builder. **Paul Marchesano** announced that this organ will receive an OHS Historic Citation.

Andrew Scanlon, recently appointed to East Carolina University and to St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Greenville, South Carolina, opened with *Marche Romaine* by Gounod. He played it with fine breadth, giving a good demonstration of the warm chorus sounds of each manual. Next were two pieces by Langlais: *Prière* from *24 Preludes*, in which we heard a clear and lovely Oboe; and *Élévation*, from *Suite médiévale*, which features the tune *ADORO TE DEVOTE*. Everyone loved this organ!

Mendelssohn's *Prelude in C Minor* followed. It was registered boldly, creating a good contrast to the Langlais. Scanlon played it with great vigor using this fine organ's resources nicely. He then played *Folk Tune*, from Percy Whitlock's *Five Short Pieces*. I loved the solo Open Diapason 8' with its warm, room-filling sound in the tenor register.

The hymn was "Christ the Lord is risen again" (*ORIENTIS PARTIBUS*); the French Medieval tune was most appropriate for this church. Next was Everett Titcomb's *Regina Coeli*, in which we heard a goodly variety of this fine organ's stops. Scanlon closed with Bach's *Fugue in E-flat*, BWV 552 (St. Anne). Every line was clearly delineated in this great piece on an organ with no mixtures. We heard refined voicing and first-rate playing!



Votteler-Hettche, 1904, St. Adalbert's Roman Catholic Church, Berea

We then proceeded to Berea and St. Adalbert's Roman Catholic Church, the oldest Polish church in Ohio, and its 1904 organ by **Cleveland organbuilder Votteler-Hettche** (2 manuals, 9 stops). The performers were **Dennis Northway** and his student and former Biggs Fellow **Adam Gruber**. The parish priest reported that the organ cost \$6,000, and was just restored for \$25,000! Attractive white and gold altars with statues stood beneath a half dome in the apse, which featured a painting of the ascending Christ. Pink marble lined the sanctuary.

Northway began with Pachelbel's *Ciaccona in D Minor*, making each voice of this lovely organ shine in the 16 variations; the flutes were especially nice. Sixteen-year-old Adam Gruber gave us some Rheinberger: *Three Trios*, op. 49. During the hymn, "Come, Labor On," *ORA LABORA*, teacher and student shared the bench, playing with four hands—this added "upperwork" to the sound. Northway inserted a piece not in the program, *In a Quiet Mood*, a gentle reflection by Arkansas composer Florence Price. Gruber ended with the *Toccata in D Minor* by Gordon Balch Nevin.



Votteler-Holtkamp-Sparling Opus 1287, 1916, Masonic Temple, Lakewood

We then went to the grand old Masonic Temple in Lakewood for a hearty lunch in its basement. We worked off our lunch by climbing several flights of stairs to the grand old lodge room, where we heard a concert by OHS favorite **William Aylesworth**, playing the 2-manual, 13-stop **Votteler-Holtkamp-Sparling organ, Opus 1287**, from 1916; it stands in a balcony opposite the stage in this elegant room, which is decorated in an Egyptian motif all around.

Aylesworth began, appropriately enough, with *Masonic March* by Theo Bonheur (Charles A. Rawlings, 1857–ca. 1930), which bounced along in good fashion. Next were Frederick Archer's (1838–1901) *Prelude*, which demonstrated the lovely strings, and *Motivo*, a quiet little piece, followed by *Summer Fancies*, op. 38, no. 2, by Rossetter G. Cole (1866–1952).

Next was *Choral Hymn* by William Spark (1823–1897), in which the warm-throated Great Diapason alternated with the Swell Vox Humana. Guilmant's *Mé-lodie*, op. 46, no. 4, followed. The last piece was *Under the Double Eagle* by Josef Franz Wagner (1856–1908). Bill got us all clapping in unison to the irresistible pulse of this music. This was another fine demonstration of a historic organ by a player with a keen insight into instruments from this period, and who always chooses literature appropriate to the instrument and the culture of its time.

I daresay that the next venue was a big reason many of us came to this particular convention: the opportunity to hear the famous 1957 4-manual, **44-stop Beckerath organ** in Cleveland's Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church in an all-Bach recital by **Joan Lippincott**. When we pulled up to the church, it seemed somehow strange that such a fine and famous organ could be standing in a church that had clearly fallen on hard



Beckerath, 1957, Trinity Lutheran Church, Cleveland

times. The 1874 structure was in a rather ordinary neighborhood. Its interior was in sad shape, with peeling paint and water stains, but up in the balcony, sure enough, was the Beckerath—its case painted in various shades of blue with gold trim. The church's warm and positive young minister has brought the parish back from the brink of closing. The organ is being restored, and has brought in many new members, who come from other parts of the city to hear it played and to enjoy his fine preaching. The significance of this organ cannot be overstated. Our *Atlas* had this to say about it and other European tracker organs imported in the late 1950s: "... these instruments provided fuel for the first chapter of America's own tracker revival, for player and builder alike."

We began with the hymn NUN DAN-KET, and sang a verse in German and then repeated the first verse in English, singing in parts. Two selections from the Leipzig Chorales followed. In *Nun Danket alle Gott*, BWV 657, Lippincott used the powerful Cornet from the Rückpositiv. In *Schmücke dich, o liebe Seele*, BWV 654, she used that Great 8' Principal to accompany the Cornet on the Kronpositiv. Next came the *Prelude and Fugue in C Major* (9/8), BWV 547. Pure exultant joy permeated every note. The phenomenal fugue has four voices on the manuals, saving the pedal for the end, when it presents the subject in augmentation. The full organ sound is magnificent: grand and yet transparent.

Lippincott then played the E-flat *Trio Sonata*, BWV 525. The third movement was taken perhaps a bit too fast, and got a little shaky, but she brought it along nicely. She ended with a first-rate performance of the *Passacaglia and Fugue in C minor*, BWV 582. Lippincott clearly has great affection for each piece and for this wonderful organ.

Late in the afternoon, we returned downtown to our hotel for a lecture given by **John Ferguson** on "The Life of Walter Holtkamp, Sr." It was a fascinating walk through the career of this pivotal figure in American organ building. Professor Ferguson pointed out Mr. Holtkamp's desire to learn from but not copy the old masters. His organs were on low wind pressure, and he used slider chests, but they were not encased; the pipes were displayed. Those visual designs were stunning to mid-20th-century Americans, and he would build the first mid-20th-century American trackers. Holtkamp was a strong-willed man, but was a colleague to his fellow organ builders, and went on to form APOBA in 1941.

After another superb dinner at the Marriott (the chef was amazing!), I walked the few blocks to St. John the Evangelist Catholic Cathedral for the evening concert by **Ken Cowan**, playing the **Votteler-Holtkamp-Sparling organ from 1948**. There are actually two organs: one in the gallery, and one in the chancel, with two duplicate 3-manual



Votteler-Holtkamp-Sparling, 1948, St. John the Evangelist Catholic Cathedral, Cleveland

stopkey consoles, each controlling both organs. The gallery organ has its Great division mounted on the railing in a kind of case with pipework unenclosed. The Swell and Choir divisions are enclosed in chambers on either side of the rear window, with the Pedal spread out between the manual divisions. The chancel organ is behind a gorgeous, hand-carved wooden screen that stands behind the altar. With a generous amount of reverberation, beautiful and even voicing, this is a very nice organ. Cowan was joined by trumpeter Jack Sutte of the Cleveland Orchestra. (On a personal note, I would learn that evening that Mr. Sutte's father, the late John Sutte, was a classmate of mine at Lawrence University in Appleton, Wisconsin. Meeting this brilliant young trumpeter was very moving for me.) The fading evening sun faintly lit the stained glass windows from Munich as we eagerly awaited the concert.

Cowan opened with Mendelssohn's *Overture to A Midsummer Night's Dream*, transcribed by Samuel P. Warren. The sounds were marvelous in the splendid acoustics of the cathedral. Cowan is a master colorist, registering his pieces with uncommon sensitivity. Elegant use of the Swell and Choir shades are Cowan trademarks. His second piece, *Stimmen der Nacht*, op. 142, no. 1, by Sigfrid Karg-Elert, demonstrated the beautiful strings and the Vox Humana. A warm and wonderful piece, it grew to a full sound, then pulled back to a bubbling flute on the Choir and the Vox Humana—beautiful sounds.

After a brief crash of the solid-state combination system, they managed to repair it and were able to move on to what I found to be the most interesting piece of the evening, *Okna Fenster: Windows, after Marc Chagall*, a four-movement work by Petr Eben for organ and trumpet. *I. Blue Window* dashed all over the place leaving splashes of color in every corner of the cathedral. *II. Green Window* was more serene, with muted trumpet and Messiaen-like sounds. The serenity gave way to darker images and louder organ tone with a growling 16' pedal reed. A more playful section followed, and we returned to sounds heard at the beginning. *III. Red Window* began *ff* in the organ. The Swell closed a bit as the trumpet joined. The music was reminiscent of "Night on Bald Mountain." Things calmed down a bit, but that darker imagery was never far away, and it returned. *IV. Gold Window* began with the theme (a Russian Orthodox chant many of us knew from the Episcopal *Hymnal 1982* in a setting of "The Beatitudes") played on the foundation stops. There was dialogue material between trumpet and organ, ending with a toccata-like section. Fantastic music!

After intermission, Cowan began the second half with Reger's *Introduction and Passacaglia in F Minor*, op. 63. It rolled through the gothic arches of this splendid building. He played it masterfully, using the expression pedals to create wonders of shading. For the first time that evening, we heard the full magnificence of this organ. He next played *Elegy* by George Thalben-Ball. They inserted a

piece by Tomassi entitled *Holy Week at Cusco*. Sutte joined Cowan, alternating between piccolo trumpet and regular trumpet, which was muted at times. We then sang that glorious hymn "I Vow to Thee My Country," whose tune comes from Holst's *The Planets—Jupiter*. It made every Anglophile's spine tingle!

Ken Cowan closed the program with *Variations on 'The Star Spangled Banner'* by Dudley Buck. It was played at the request of convention chairperson Joseph McCabe, and was just the right dessert following the dense music that preceded it. We all sang along on the last variation. Cowan played with total abandon and clarity—he makes everything he plays sound so easy. Thus ended the first full day.

Tuesday, 7 July 2009

Our first stop on Monday took us to Cleveland's Pilgrim Congregational Church UCC, a massive Richardsonian Romanesque structure, to hear their 3-manual, 36-stop **Farrand & Votey organ, Opus 719**, from 1894. The organ was rebuilt several times; in 1992 it was restored by the Holtkamp Organ Company. (Our *Atlas* told us that Walter Holtkamp, Sr. attended this church as a boy.) It stands proudly right up front in this Akron-plan building. The pipes are handsomely stenciled, and the case is crowned with a wooden statue of an angel blowing a trumpet.



Farrand & Votey Opus 719, 1894, Pilgrim Congregational Church, Cleveland

The concert was given by **Stephen Schnurr**, his student **Micah Raebel**, whom we heard at the 2007 convention in Indiana, and young tenor **Nathan Leath**. We began with the hymn "All hail the pow'r of Jesus' Name" (CORONATION), using both piano (Raebel) and organ (Schnurr). They then launched into a surprisingly effective piano-organ arrangement of Franck's *Prelude, Fugue and Variation*, op. 18. Next, Schnurr played a lovely *Berceuse* (1911) by James H. Rogers (1857–1940). We heard many attractive sounds of this beautiful organ, especially the strings, flutes, and the Concert Flute. The next piece was also

by Rogers, *Theme and Variations*, 'Second Suite' (1915), which showed off the fine Doppel Floete and Oboe.

Two more pieces by Rogers followed: *Two Offertory Songs*: 1. *Today if ye will hear his voice*, and 2. *Out of the Depths*. Leath sang and Raebel accompanied him on the organ. Both young men did very well with this literature, which was well-suited to this grand old building and organ. Micah Raebel then ended the concert with a dashing performance of the splendid *Toccata* (from *Dix Pièces*) by Eugène Gigout. I give Steven Schnurr and Dennis Northway much credit for sharing the spotlight of a national convention recital with their students.



Votteler-Hettche, 1913, St. Procopius Catholic Church, Cleveland

Our second stop of the day took us to a sad yet proud place: the beautiful St. Procop's (short for Procopius) Catholic Church in Cleveland, founded as a Czech parish in the late 19th century. I admired the beautiful marble altars and statuary, the windows, and wall decoration. I found myself seated next to a very old man, well into his late 80s. I asked him if he was a member of this church, and he said that he was, but added, "it's a dirty shame, though. The bishop is going to close it on October 30. He is closing 50 churches in the diocese." His voice was bitter and sad. He told me that he and his wife were married there many years ago. A nun who was in charge of the parish proudly touted the fact that she had brought the parish into the black—all bills were paid; but it was still closing on October 30. We presented her with an album of photographs our superb OHS photographers had taken of this beautiful church. She was deeply touched.

The organ was in the rear balcony: a 2-manual, 22-stop, **1913 instrument by Votteler-Hettche**, originally tubular-pneumatic, now changed to electric action. The organ had not been heard in many years, but was made playable for this concert by several OHS volunteers. Many members of the parish had joined us, eager to hear the organ once again.

The recitalist was **Randy Bourne**, who began with Wagner's *Friedensmarsch* from *Rienzi*. With the first sound emanating from the organ, the dear old man next to me jumped slightly; he then leaned forward. After a moment, I noted a tear fall from his eyes to the floor. It broke my heart. Such is the power a pipe organ and its history in the building in which it stands has over our hearts and emotions. The piece was a grand gesture to this gracious old building and the people who worshiped there.

Beethoven's *Minuet in G major*, WoO 10, no. 6, was next, smartly played on a variety of 8-foot stops. A cipher, unfortunately, began on the Swell, and many hands attempted to repair it. Soon enough, it was just fine again, and we went on to the third piece, *Mélodie in E-flat Major* (*Souvenir d'un lieu cher*, op. 42, no. 3) by Tchaikovsky. (The Wagner, Beethoven and Tchaikovsky pieces were all played by Edwin Arthur Kraft at the dedication of this organ.) We all admired the sweet tones of an instrument whose fate is unknown after the church closes. We then sang the hymn "Sing praise to

God, our highest good" (MIT FREUDEN ZART). It was very moving for all the St. Procop's parishioners to hear the fine OHS singing. I suspect that there were few dry eyes all around. It was like being at a funeral.

Bourne ended with Mendelssohn's *Sonata in C Minor*, op. 65, no. 2. It was well played and a good chance to hear the power of this fine organ. With heavy hearts, we left this sad and beautiful church wishing there was something we could do to help their circumstances.

Our buses took us to Holy Angels R.C. Church in Sandusky for a hymn sing accompanied by some of our members on the 9-stop, 2-manual **Carl Barckhoff organ (1885)** that had stood silently in the corner of the balcony for decades. The church got it working for us. It was a great moment! Let's hope it continues to be used. Sandusky is an attractive town on the shore of Lake Erie, with countless churches. At one intersection, I saw three churches!



E. M. Skinner, 1926, Toledo Museum of Art

Saëns' *My Heart at Thy Sweet Voice*. The effect was pure magic. It should be pointed out that the ushers and security staff had agreed to stay late so that we could hear Tharp's recital on their treasured organ, a recital that was now two hours late—the only scheduling glitch of the week. We were all very grateful.

Stephen Tharp, looking quite snappy in his black and tan Captain Kirk-like attire, came out to the console, located center stage. He began with Mendelssohn's *Overture to St. Paul*, which opened with the intoning of "Wachet auf" on the Tuba Mirabilis. This W. T. Best transcription makes one think that the piece was written for the organ, it's that idiomatic. Tharp played it brilliantly.

Next came the *Adagio* from Widor's *Symphony VIII*. Its mysterious and melancholic sonorities worked wonderfully on this organ's strings and foundations. Tharp then played Elgar's *Larghetto, Serenade for Strings*, op. 20, in a transcription by C. H. Trevor. Quiet strings accompanied a soft solo stop. He used the tremolo to great effect, turning it on and off as a singer would use vibrato, and used the shades very well, too. The last piece was the *Fantasy and Fugue on 'How Brightly Shines The Morning Star'*, op. 40, no. 1, by Max Reger. It was marvelously played. Tharp managed to untangle all of Reger's intense and driving lines and bring them into focus. On the way, we got to hear more of the very beautiful solo stops that Skinner left as his legacy. By the time he got to that amazing fugue, we were in awe once again of E. M. Skinner's genius and the orchestral style of organ building. And we were, most assuredly, in awe of Stephen Tharp.

We then bused to Toledo's great Cathedral of Our Lady, Queen of the Most Holy Rosary, easily the largest church building we would enter during the convention—it is absolutely spectacular. We



E. M. Skinner, 1931, Cathedral of Our Lady, Queen of the Most Holy Rosary, Toledo

were fed dinner in the cathedral parish hall, but many of us could not resist a peek into the massive church before we ate. It is truly one of America's great cathedrals, with marble, elegantly carved wood, glorious frescoes, huge soaring stained glass windows, and a ceiling that towers over the grand baldacchino and altar. The **Skinner organ**, installed in 1931, has 4 manuals, 59 stops, and 75 ranks. The console is on the floor of the sanctuary, and the pipes are in a chamber above and to the left of the altar.

Stephen Schnurr presented the ca-

thedral with an OHS Historic Organ Citation for its magnificent 1931 Skinner organ. Our *Atlas* told us that it is tonally and technologically intact, "with not only the pipework but all original console and relay mechanism intact." **Todd Wilson** was our performer. He grew up in Toledo, and this instrument was a great source of inspiration to him. He began with Dupré's *Cortège et Litanie*, op. 19, no. 2, as transcribed by Lynnwood Farnam, which made for a great program opener—a moving and powerful introduction to this organ.



Johnson & Son Opus 462, 1875, First Congregational UCC, Sandusky

After lunch, we went to Sandusky's First Congregational UCC to hear **Christopher Marks** demonstrate the fine **1875 Johnson & Son organ**, Opus 462, 2 manuals, 26 ranks—an organ with a wild history of countless moves, finally finding its way to its present location in 1982 in a restoration with additions and replacement of two missing ranks by my friend James C. Taylor, of Kaukauna, Wisconsin. It stands in an alcove to the right of the altar area in an Akron-style Richardsonian Romanesque building with a beautiful stained glass window in the ceiling. Marks began with *Spring Greeting* (1896) by Nathan Hale Allen (1948–1925), a charming celebration of spring. Next was *Night: A Meditation* (1907) by Arthur Foote—lovely, evocative music, which he played with great sensitivity, using the organ's sweet, soft sounds very well. After the hymn "Now, on land and sea descending" (VESPER HYMN), came a chorale prelude on that same tune by Samuel B. Whitney (1842–1914)—another charmer of a piece, followed by Horatio Parker's *Scherzino*, op. 66, no. 3 (1910). Marks closed with a muscular reading of Dudley Buck's *Allegro vivace non troppo* from *Second Sonata*, op. 77 (1877). This was a fine and entertaining program with Christopher Marks's usual brilliant playing.

Our buses took us to Toledo and the elegant Toledo Museum of Art. We were to have heard a demonstration by **Robert Barney** of the **1785 Johannes Strumphler** 1-manual cabinet organ. Alas, it was not to be, as we had gotten behind schedule. So we made our way into the large 1750-seat auditorium known as "The Peristyle" to hear the 4-manual **Skinner organ from 1926** in a recital by **Stephen Tharp**. First, however, we were granted a fascinating lecture by **Joseph Dzeda** and **Nicholas Thompson-Alen**, two of America's organ restoration experts. Dzeda told us that the organ had been dead—it took two years to restore it. It features an automatic player mechanism, and they told of a recently discovered collection of organ rolls. We heard one that was 80 years old by a Mr. Snow, a New York City organist, playing Saint-

THE ORGAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY
2010 NATIONAL CONVENTION

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania



MONDAY, JUNE 21 THROUGH FRIDAY, JUNE 25
Optional additional day ~ Saturday, June 26

The Organ Historical Society will hold its 2010 annual convention in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania from June 21 through June 25. Among the 26 organs featured will be those built by Joseph Harvey (1838), Farrand & Votey (1895), Hook & Hastings (1895 & 1928), Felgemaker (1872 and 1898), Wirsching (1904 and 1915), Austin (1905), Kimball (1907 and 1931), Aeolian (1909), Estey (1917), Aeolian-Skinner (1935/2007 and 1955), Beckerath (1962), Flentrop (1969), Möller (1970), and Holtkamp (1970). A special presentation and banquet will take place at historic Carnegie Music Hall.

For more information and online registration, visit our Web site

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PHOTO BY LEN LEVASSEUR: DERRICK & FELGEMAKER (1872)





Skinner, 1931, Cathedral of Our Lady, Queen of the Most Holy Rosary, Toledo

Next came three English miniatures. The first was John Stanley's *Voluntary in F*, which he played on the diapasons, then on the flutes as a quiet echo. A chirpy cornet-like sound danced about. The acoustic favored the music pleasantly. The next "miniature" was C. S. Lang's wonderful *Tuba Tune in D*, one of my favorite Easter preludes. The huge scale of the solo reed was thrilling. The third English miniature was the beautiful *Londonderry Air*, as transcribed by Edwin H. Lemare. Wilson called forth gorgeous lush sounds from the organ and played it with great sensitivity. Near the end we heard the warm *Vox Humana*, the 32' flue, and the celestes. He reduced the organ to a whisper and gave us one last puff from the 32'. It was truly lovely.

Wilson ended the first half with Franck's *Choral No 1. in E*—a marvelous choice for this organ and this room. The organ has all the right stops, and he used them in just the right way. His tempo was consistent throughout, which held everything together.

The second half began with Gerre Hancock's *Variations on 'Ora Labora'*. The tune was written by T. T. Noble upon the occasion of the founding of St. Thomas' Choir School in New York. We then sang the hymn "Come, labor on." The Hancock variations were quite good, showing lots of variety. Soprano Nancy Canfield joined Wilson in *Les Angélus*, op. 57, three songs by Louis Vierne evoking the three hours of prayer in a day: *Au Matin*, a gentle rocking piece; *A Midi*, noon, a bit heartier and more robust; and *Au Soir*, a quiet piece introduced by the ringing of a handbell three times. It ended very softly.

Wilson then performed *Prelude on 'Iam sol recedit'* (1924) by Bruce Simonds (1895–1989), demonstrating the classic Skinner soft solo reeds on this extraordinary organ. He concluded with the well-known jaunty *Allegro vivace* from Widor's *Symphonie V*, played masterfully. The organ fills this great marble and stone space with tones high and low, laughing reeds, and rumbling basses. Wilson plays with fantastic but controlled drive. The ending at *fff* was astonishing. Reluctantly, we left this great cathedral and boarded our buses for the drive back to Cleveland.

Wednesday, 8 July 2009

We began the day with a lecture at the hotel by Sebastian M. Glück on "The Grand Romantic Organs of Jewish Synagogues," a fascinating lecture on a little-known subject. I've long admired Glück's fine writing, and his lecture did not disappoint. We saw many historical photographs of temple organs, and learned how they went in and out of fashion.

Our first stop of the day was at Plymouth Church UCC in Shaker Heights, a prosperous and leafy suburb of Cleveland. The church itself has a 3-manual Holtkamp, but we were to hear the organ in their chapel: an 1844 George Stevens organ that has bounced all over the country from Boston to the west coast and back east to Plymouth Church.



George Stevens, 1844, Plymouth Church UCC, Shaker Heights

Many things have changed on the organ in its various moves, but it remains a nice instrument with two manuals, 27 stops, and 22 ranks. It was first heard by the OHS convention in San Francisco in 1988. The organ stands in a rear balcony. It has an ivory-colored case, with robin's egg blue façade pipes and gold pipe shades.

We were pleased to have Bruce Stevens demonstrate this organ for us. He began what was to be another of his stellar OHS recitals with Pachelbel's *Partita on 'Was Gott tut das ist wohlgetan'*, a great choice for an organ demonstration. We sat in chairs already turned round facing the organ in the rear gallery. The room is in a New England meetinghouse style, with clear glass windows that brought in abundant morning sunshine. The wood floor and rounded ceiling gave much resonance to the room as we sang the hymn "What e'er my God ordains is right" (WAS GOT T U T).

Stevens then played *O Clemens! O pia!* from *Five Invocations* by Henri Dallery (1849–1934), in which we heard the Swell Dulciana with tremulant accompanying a Great flute playing in the tenor register. He ended with the ever-popular Dubois *Toccata from Twelve Pieces*, in which we heard the Great Trumpet used as a chorus reed. Stevens played very well, giving us much to enjoy. His usual refinement, shaping of phrase, and delicacy of articulation were all on display. This very old organ is robust yet gentle, and it was a great start to the day!



Votteler-Holtkamp-Sparling Opus 1602, 1938, St. James Anglican-Catholic Church, Cleveland

Next was another fine Votteler-Holtkamp-Sparling organ, Opus 1602, from 1938, in St. James Anglican-Catholic Church. The rector greeted us in cassock and surplice, carrying his beretta. The church is a small gem, with many pretty things. The organ is in the back on the main floor, with a sort of fence divid-



E. M. Skinner, Cleveland Public Auditorium

ing its place from the nave. The organ is really the work of Walter Holtkamp, and was a great chance for him to work out his own ideas on organ building. The Positiv division is mounted on the wall, unenclosed. The organ has 3 manuals, 20 stops, and 25 ranks.

The program, played by John Ferguson, was to be a hymn-sing with chorale preludes. It was abbreviated, however, causing some confusion. He opened with Bach's *Prelude and Fugue in C*, BWV 545, which was nicely played. Next was Herbert Howells' *Psalms Prelude, Set I, No. 2*. It worked well, but seemed to want a celeste. Then came three settings of *Es ist ein Ros'*, by Praetorius, Dennis Lovinfosse, and Brahms, after which we sang the hymn "Earth and all stars." Ferguson's clever introduction and verses assigned to voice types, plus a rather cheeky verse for the organ on verse four that included references to "The Stars and Stripes Forever," made for much fun. I was happy to surrender that verse to the organ because I can't sing about "loud boiling test tubes" with a straight face. The hymn "Now thank we all our God" ended the program. He improvised a fitting postlude on NUN DANKET.

After lunch at the hotel, we had the annual meeting, and then walked across the large civic mall to the Cleveland Public Auditorium, a vast structure. Built in the Italian Renaissance-style and spanning two city blocks, it was completed in 1922. We found ourselves on a great stage somewhat awed by the place, curtains drawn on both sides of us. All 500 OHSers were completely silent as we stood there looking up into the wings, on one side, at the massive E. M. Skinner organ with its 5-manual console. The pipes were on the second story of the wings, and, we were told, went back some 45 feet. We had all seen the photos of what was to come next once the curtains would part, and the anticipation was building. Finally the curtains on our left opened revealing a large, 2,700-seat theatre—red and gold done up in Spanish motifs. And then the curtains on our right parted, and we saw the vast interior of the convention hall, which seats 15,500. At 300' long, 215' wide and 80' high, with no supporting columns, it is quite a sight. And there we stood on this stage made to serve both venues, beneath this enormous Skinner organ. The location, in the wings, was not great for the projection of the organ's sound, but the architects would not have it any other way. So, we were told, the organ did its best work in radio broadcasts. It has now fallen into disuse and only a few sounds could be heard that day.

Convention chair Joe McCabe gave a good talk on the building and the organ. Young Jonathan Ortloff played the parts of the organ that worked and then crawled around in the chamber making some of the large pipes speak. He was like a monkey swinging fearlessly from tree to tree. It was left to our imaginations to wonder at the instrument's potential. In fact, the fate of the organ and its building is uncertain—what a pity. It is truly a stupendous place. You can view a video of the organ at <www.organsociety.org/2009/welcome.html>.

Our next visit was to the great Shrine Church of St. Stanislaus in Cleveland. It is a large building, beautifully decorated in 19th-century style, with statues and elegant carvings everywhere. It was built to serve the Polish immigrants who flocked to the city at the end of the 1800s. The good-sized 2-manual, 39-stop, 33-rank William Schuelke organ was built in Milwaukee ca. 1909; it got rather beat up in a tornado that toppled the church's enormous 232-foot steeples. The organ was rebuilt by Votteler-Holtkamp-Sparling as Opus 1579 in 1933. Work was done in 1988 that left the organ unplayable. James P. Leek Organ Company of Oberlin, Ohio re-leathered it, and installed solid-state switching. It stands today in the rear gallery.

Our recitalist was Rhonda Sider Edgington, making her fourth OHS convention appearance. She began with two of Schumann's *Four Sketches for Pedal Piano*, op. 58, numbers 1 and 4, which gave a good hearing of the foundation stops. Next came two selections from Karg-Elert's *Choral Improvisations*, op. 65: *Aus tiefer Not schrei ich zu dir* and *O daß ich tausend Zungen hätte*, which showed off several of the beautiful solo stops on this fine organ and the generous acoustic of the church. I especially liked the Doppel Flute—but then I always like Doppel Flutes! *Cantilène* (1900) by David Fleuret (1869–1915) followed—very nice music, which floated blithely through the church, gently moving along without a care in the world. Next came Mendelssohn's *Fugue in E Minor*, played with snap and polish.



Kegg console, First United Methodist Church, Cleveland

The evening recital was at Cleveland's First United Methodist Church, which was founded in 1839. The present 1300-seat building, of Indiana limestone, was completed in March 1905. The exterior is English Gothic, with a huge lantern tower over the crossing. The interior, however, is a delightful surprise. It appears Byzantine in color and design, with elaborate stenciling. The vast space under the lantern tower floats over the



Casavant, 1943, First United Methodist Church, Cleveland

altar area behind which the organ rises. The Geo. H. Ryder organ, built for an earlier church, was brought to the new location by the Votteler-Hettche Organ Co. of Cleveland. W. B. McAllister Co. of Cleveland created the truly remarkable golden organ screen, which wraps around the back of the chancel, measuring 40' by 60'. The pipe flats are separated by four life-sized reproductions of Fra Angelico's angels from his Linaiuoli Triptych. The present organ uses that case. It is a **Casavant, built in 1943**, with numerous subsequent additions; a 4-manual console from 1998 by the Kegg Pipe Organ Company features terraced jambs and is movable.

Our recitalist for the evening was **Nathan Laube**, who, we learned from Michael Barone, was celebrating his 21st birthday that night; we sang "Happy Birthday" to him! He had just graduated from Curtis. He began his recital with a joyous and almost giddy performance of his own transcription of the *Overture to Die Fledermaus* by Johann Strauss, Jr. His sense of color, touch, contrast, tempo, and dynamics is of the highest order. Next, he played Karg-Elert's *Symphonischer Choral: Jesu, meine Freude*, op. 87, no. 2. In the first movement, *Introduzione* (Inferno), the full-length 32' Contra Bombarde was most effective. The second movement, *Canzone*, had a beautiful solo from the Oboe; the strings are especially lovely. The final movement, *Fuga con choral*, woke the instrument from its peaceful slumber. The first half ended with the singing of the hymn **JESU, MEINE FREUDE**.

The second half began with movement four (Variations on 'Puer Nobis') from Widor's *Symphonie Gothique*, op. 70. We heard a blizzard of notes in the manuals, with the full pedal thundering forth the mighty tune. Laube ended with the *94th Psalm* by Reubke. Now it should be said that this entire recital was played from memory. He had some difficulty with the combination action and had to stop to reset some things, but he managed to get back on track completely

unruffled. For an encore, he played *Andante sostenuto* from Widor's *Symphonie Gothique*, op. 70.

Thursday, 9 July 2009

The day began with a panel discussion and virtual organ crawl through the Cleveland Public Auditorium organ, built by Ernest M. Skinner. Our panelists and presenters were **Joseph Dzeda** and **Nicholas Thompson-Allen**. It was a fascinating talk, with photos showing the building in its various uses over the years, as well as the virtual organ tour. They touched on preservation of the organ, concern for its relocation, and, as the *Atlas* said, "practical issues surrounding instruments in public venues."

Our first recital of the morning took place at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, built in 1917, in Elyria. A stone church on a leafy corner with a well-proportioned steeple, it has a 3-manual, 32-stop **Skinner organ, Opus 398** (1923), in a chamber to the right of the altar. **Anne Wilson** began with the hymn "Joyful, joyful, we adore Thee" (*ODE TO JOY*). Her introduction used elements from Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*—nicely done. Then, a *Sortie* by Lefébure-Wély (1817–1869), written at a time when French organ music for the church resembled that of the music hall or even a circus. This was no exception—great fun with plenty of reeds and foundations making splendid oom-pahs. Next was Brahms's setting of *Schmücke dich, o liebe Seele*, using the 4' flute. Wilson then played *The Musical Snuffbox* by Anatol Liadov (1885–1914), which demonstrated the Celesta (Harp). Next Vierne's *Impromptu*, from *Pièces de Fantaisie*, op. 54, no. 2, which she tossed off with great ease—I liked her use of the Clarabella and the fine Vox Humana. Wilson continued with Lemare's *Irish Air from County Derry*, which featured the strings and harp. She ended with a cracking good performance of Rossini's *Overture to William Tell*. Great fun, and a fine demonstration recital.

The next stop in Elyria was kitty-corner from St. Andrew's: St. Mary Catholic



E. M. Skinner, Opus 398, 1923, St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, Elyria



William A. Johnson, 1865, St. Mary Catholic Church, Elyria

Church, an 1886 red brick building with a charming Victorian Gothic portico. Stepping inside, however, revealed a church stripped of all decoration; it was as if it had been sacked. But it still had its **1865 William A. Johnson organ**, rebuilt and enlarged by Philipp Wirsching ca. 1900, and later by Homer Blanchard. In 1987 James Leek gave the organ a new Trumpet, replacing one that had disappeared. Originally one manual and pedal, the organ now has two manuals, pedal, and 12 stops.

Yun Kyong Kim, making her second OHS appearance, began with *Prélude* (from *Trois Pièces*, op. 29, no. 1) by Gabriel Pierné. The hymn came from *The Hymnal 1940* (Episcopal): "I heard the voice of Jesus say" (*VOX DILECTI*)—a fine choice for this place and organ; I liked the Great Trumpet. Next, she played a partita on *Ach wie wichtig, ach wie flüchtig* by Georg Böhm that gave a fine survey of the stops. The last variation used the Principal chorus and the

Trumpet to good effect. Her next piece was Dudley Buck's *Home, Sweet Home*, op. 30 (1868), dedicated to "his friend W. H. Johnson," the original builder of this organ—great choice! One of the things I admire so much about OHS recitals is the pleasure we take in music of this sort played straightforwardly—no winking. The dignity of the instruments and composers is preserved, and we are transported back in time, to another aesthetic—like hearing Bach on a Silbermann. Yun Kyong Kim ended her program with *Etude in D Minor* from *Four Concert Etudes*, op. 51, no. 4 (1904) by George Elbridge Whiting. This was a brilliant performance, with wonderful and varied colors from this 12-stop organ.

After a box lunch, buses took us to Wellington to hear the 1916 2-manual, 13-stop **J. W. Steere organ, Opus 417**, in the First Congregational Church UCC—OHS charter member Randall Wagner's home church. The organ sits in a niche to the right of the altar in this

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J. W. Steere, Opus 417, 1916, First Congregational UCC, Wellington



J. W. Steere, Opus 417, 1916, First Congregational UCC, Wellington

octagonal Gothic structure. The interior is crowned with a lantern tower at the peak—a Tiffany-like dome. The manuals and stop action are mechanical, while the pedal is tubular-pneumatic.

Recitalist **Grant Edwards** began with John Stanley's *Voluntary in G Major*, op. 7, no. 9, which worked quite well on this organ. I liked the Oboe, the only reed on the organ, which functioned well as a solo voice and a chorus reed. We heard it as a solo in the next piece, Denis Bédard's *Récit (Suite du premier ton)*. The slow movement from Mendelssohn's *Third Sonata* was next. John and James Leek had restored the hand-pumping mechanism in 1983, and the present organist at the church hand-pumped the organ for this piece. Edwards played a *Fughetta on "Austria,"* after which we sang that tune to the hymn "God whose giving knows no ending," then, Brahms's *Schmücke dich, O liebe Seele* on a very beautiful flute. Arthur Foote's *Canzonetta*, op. 71, no. 4 was next—a captivating piece. The last work was Noël Goemanne's *Partita on "Simple Gifts"*—fine playing, and an all-around good demonstration of a beautiful organ.

This beautiful, sunny afternoon, we went to the attractive city of Oberlin, its downtown festooned with large hanging baskets of flowers—right to a church on the green at Oberlin College: the First Church in Oberlin UCC, established in 1834. The red brick building would look right at home in New England. The interior is like a New England meetinghouse, with horseshoe balcony and clear glass rectangular windows. The choir area and organ rise above the altar and pulpit. The



Gober, First Church in Oberlin UCC

organ reposes today in a neo-classical case retained from an Estey organ built for the church in 1908. A Skinner organ from Second Congregational Church replaced the Estey when the two churches merged in the 1920s. The **Gober organ company** from Elora, Ontario, and now of Oberlin, built the present organ, retaining the white Estey case and seven ranks from the Skinner. It is a large 2-manual and pedal organ of 40 stops and 47 ranks, mechanical key action and electric stop action, with solid-state combination action. Halbert Gober is curator of organs (and there are a lot of them!) at Oberlin College.

The performer was **Jack Mitchener**, appointed in 2008 as associate professor of organ at Oberlin. Dr. Mitchener opened with Frank Bridge's marvelous *Three Pieces*, the *Adagio* of which has become quite a favorite. We admired the solo flutes and the Clarinet. The fascinating fugue subject is soft at first, but builds to a rolling boil complete with 32' Contrabourdon; he brought it down gently at the end. The third movement, *Allegro con spirito*, was indeed fast and spirited, and the playing was well paced and articulated. The organ has a few rough edges, but the overall sound is rich in tone and powerful. Since it is right on campus, it is used regularly as a teaching and practice instrument. Saint-Saëns' *Fantaisie in D-flat Major*, op. 101 came next, and was played very well. *Spring Song* by Harry Rowe Shelley (1858–1947) was an engaging romp—a bonbon. The hymn was "All my hope on God is founded," with its awe-inspiring tune **MICHAEL** by Herbert Howells. Mitchener's final work was Mendelssohn's *Sonata No. 1 in F Minor*, op. 65. His playing possesses great power and solidity. This was a very impressive performance in every way.

The convention group was divided

in half, with some taking a self-guided tour of the Julus Organ Center, featuring Oberlin's 14 practice organs by builders including Holtkamp, Noack, and Flentrop, then attending another fine recital by Dr. Mitchener in the beautiful Fairchild Chapel designed by New York architect Cass Gilbert (Woolworth Building, George Washington Bridge) and completed in 1931. Seating just 200, it was a perfect place to hear the beautiful 2-manual and pedal organ by **John Brombaugh (Opus 25)**, from 1981, one of the earliest examples of a modern instrument tuned in quarter-comma meantone. This gothic chapel also contains a small 1957 Flentrop (one manual with pedal pulldowns). Mitchener played a varied program—Bach: *Komm, Gott, Schöpfer, heiliger Geist*, BWV 667; Andrea Antico: *Chi non crede*; Giovanni Paolo Cima: *Canzon quarta, La Pace*; William Byrd: *The Carmans Whistle*; and Buxtehude: *Praeludium in C Major*, Bux-WV 137. All of this sounded marvelous on this unique instrument—a revelation.

After dinner under a white tent in a park, we headed to Oberlin's Finney Chapel, a sort of Spanish Romanesque structure, for the evening recital by **Diane Meredith Belcher** on the **C. B. Fisk organ, Opus 116**, from 2001. The 3-manual organ has 57 registers, built in the French Romantic style, taking its inspiration from the instruments of Aristide Cavaillé-Coll. The Pedal has three 32' stops. The tone is robust and colorful. It sits in a dark walnut-colored case on a balcony above the back of the stage.

Belcher began with *Three Preludes and Fugues*, op. 37 by Mendelssohn. In the C-minor, she attacked the music with a confident stride. I found the room to be resonant, but not reverberant—a pity. All that money spent on this classy organ, and the room is relatively dead. The G-major began with what I assumed to be the Flûte harmonique, which sang out into the room with a rich, noble sound. The fugue grew out of 8' 4' 2' principal sounds, which sparkled well and were nicely colored with the addition of a reed. The D-minor used mixtures for the first time. We also heard 16' manual tone and the 32' Bourdon in the Pedal. Quieter sounds on the *Récit* grew to a *ff* as the piece wound itself around. Her performance was fantastic. The full power of the pedal came out in the fugue.

Next came another visit to Lefébure-Wély land, with his *Élévation ou communion en la mineur*, followed by *Pifferari* (a piffaro is a type of Italian bagpipe). Belcher used the Fisk organ's *Effet d'Orage* stop, which creates the sound of thunder by sounding about seven pedal keys at once, as a drone went on the left hand while the right hand had dialogue between trumpets and flutes. Quite a piece! Then, Guilment's *Prière en fa majeur*, op. 16, no. 2, which was a nice airing of the *Vox Humana*. The first half ended with Gigout's *Pièce jubilatoire*, which begins quietly and builds to full organ. The full organ was thrilling. After the intermission, Michael Barone, a graduate of Oberlin, read a list of his classmates there in the late 1960s. It read like a who's who of renowned American organists, teachers, and, of course, one very famous radio personality!

The second half of the program comprised a single work: Maurice Duruflé's *Suite*, op. 5. The expression "hair-raising" cannot be overused here. The *Prelude* was full of thunder in the bass, with the flash of manual reeds and mixtures. The *Sicilienne* featured a solo on the *Récit's* Basson-hautbois, followed by the beautiful strings accompanying the Flûte Harmonique—things of loveliness. The *Toccata* was played with an incredible fury. Pure joy and elation radiated forth from Belcher and this fantastic instrument.

Friday, 10 July 2009

Our first concert of the day was at Temple Tifereth Israel, a most impressive landmark on University Circle. The architecture was described in our atlas as "Romanesque and Byzantine." Dedicated in 1924, it features a vast dome rising 85 feet over the sanctuary, which seats 1,227 on the main floor and another 659 in the mezzanine. The original organ

was a **Kimball with four manuals** and a horseshoe console. The console was rebuilt by Ruhland Organs of Cleveland in 1967, and is now a Holtkamp-style 3-manual with stop keys. They retained much of the Kimball pipework, including diaphones and tibias. The organ is in the front of the building in chambers to the left and right of the choir gallery.

Justin Hartz played a wonderful recital of period pieces on this unusual instrument. He began with *A Song of the Sea* by English composer H. Alexander Matthews (1879–1973), which featured the Diaphone. Next was *Careless Butterfly* by Richard Barthélemy (1869–1937) in a transcription by Firmin Swinnen. This was a tour of the grand old organ's solo stops—there were many enchanting Kimball sounds.

Then we heard three pieces in theatre organ style: *Forgotten Melody* by Gus Kahn and Jesse Crawford, arranged by Rosa Rio who just turned 107; Hartz's transcription of *The Whistler and His Dog* by Arthur Pryor; and *Trees* by Otto Rasbach, based on the poem by Joyce Kilmer. The hymn was "May He who kept us" by James H. Rogers. Hartz ended his concert with a good reading of Franck's *Pièce héroïque*.



Hradetzky, 1986, St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Cleveland Heights

We then drove to the tony and very beautiful neighborhood of Cleveland Heights for a recital at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, a large English Gothic structure of Indiana limestone. The 1951 building was designed by J. Beyers Hays of Walker & Weeks, Cleveland. Our *Atlas* states that the same firm also designed the Public Auditorium in 1922 and Severance Hall in 1930. Karel Paukert is the organist at St. Paul's and presides over three pipe organs, the most famous being the large organ by **Walter Holtkamp built in 1952**. It rises behind the altar screen, and has three manuals and pedal, with 44 stops. John Ferguson wrote in the atlas: "St. Paul's Episcopal organ can be taken as a good example of the mature style of Walter Holtkamp. It was his favorite instrument. Many consider it to be his masterpiece." But we'll come to this organ later.

David Schrader began his program on the smallest of the three organs in this church: a one-manual portable organ from 2002 by Czech builder **Vladimir Slajch**. It stood in the side aisle to our right. Its bright red case with blue and gold trim really made a statement in this mostly white room. Schrader stood as he played some pieces from Frescobaldi's *Fiori Musicali* (1635). In the *Bergamasca*, the gentle flute, Copula, filled the large room easily. He then made his way to the rear balcony, where a second organ awaited him: a 2-manual and pedal, 21-stop **Hradetzky from 1986**. The pipes are mounted on the railing, and the console is behind the case. The organ is in 17th-century Northern Italian style. It can be hand pumped, and has all manner of toys: drums, bells and whistles. The *Toccata per l'Elevazione* used the organ's *Voce umana*. That was followed by the *Ricercar cromatico dopo il credo*. Then

the fun began with the toy counter as he moved from Frescobaldi to Claude-Benigne Balbastre's *Variations on the Marseillaise* and *Ça Ira*—it was a hoot from start to finish.

Schrader then moved to the Holtkamp behind the altar. The hymn we sang was not well chosen for our group or for the instrument: "God of our fathers, whose almighty hand" (NATIONAL HYMN). We sing with great gusto, and with this hymn you need powerful solo reeds for the fanfares. The fanfares were written in our music, but he chose not to play them. So that was confusing right from the start. He also played it in a lower key, C major, I think. Then, between the third and fourth verses he played an extended interlude that seemed to wander through the circle of fifths for so long, as he modulated upward, that we were left uncertain as to when we should enter for the last verse. When he played a quasi-fanfare, half of us began to sing, and half waited for two measures. It was quite a rubble. The last piece was *Trois Danses* by Jehan Alain. I love this work and had been looking forward to it. The organ seemed well suited for it, but Schrader seemed to lose his way. The music lacked an inner pulse, which holds the musical line together.

We then went to the huge Church of the Covenant, another grand English Gothic building made of Indiana limestone. It features a large tower over the crossing containing a 47-bell carillon of Dutch bells. The first thing we did was gather in the church to sing the hymn "All Creatures of Our God and King" (LASST UNS ERFREUEN), with **Jonathan Moyer** playing the **5-manual Aeolian-Skinner** rebuild of a Skinner organ. The pipes of this organ are placed all over the room, so the effect is rather overwhelming. He played it well and gave us a good demonstration of the instrument. We then ate a box lunch on the beautiful grounds as we listened to carillonneur **John Gouwens**, who played with fine shading and color music from many periods including an improvisation on a submitted theme.



Holtkamp Portativ, 1935, Cleveland Museum of Art

We then walked over to the beautiful Cleveland Museum of Art. Unfortunately, the large Holtkamp organ was in storage due to renovations in the auditorium. But we did get to hear the **Holtkamp Art Deco Portativ** from 1935 in a recital by organist **Gregory Crowell** and soprano **Kathryn Stieler**. The organ's case, designed by architect Richard Rychtarik, looks like something that stepped out of a 1930s Fred Astaire movie. The organ marked a return to tracker action in American organ building—a thing that would not be seen again until the 1960s. The recital was held in a reverberant gallery. Dr. Crowell began with *Partite sopra La Romanesca* by Michelangelo Rossi (1601–1656). Ms. Stieler began with *Amarilli, mia bella* by Caccini. Her even tone was rich and pure, filling the gallery with sound. Giovanni Legrenzi's *Che fiero costume* was next, sung with great fire and freedom. Crowell's accompaniment was superb.

Then we heard two movements from OHS member David Dahl's *An Italian Suite*. Dahl's writing is quite fine, and



E. M. Skinner, Opus 816, 1931, Severance Hall, Cleveland

Crowell played this music very well, beginning with *Pavana* and ending with *Gagliarda*. Ms. Stieler returned for two more songs: the gracious *Intorno all'idolo* by Antonio Cesti, followed by the well-known and joyous *Già il sole dal Gange* by Alessandro Scarlatti. It was an elegant program beautifully performed by two gifted musicians.

We returned to the Marriott to have dinner and get ready for the evening concert, the closing event of what had been a truly great convention. A record 530 registrants took part, even in the difficult economy we were having. The convention sold itself, with stunning photos on display at last summer's convention in Seattle, in a gorgeous calendar we all received before Christmas, and, of course in the brilliant convention issue of *The Tracker* magazine, with more photos and tantalizing prose.

And now we found ourselves entering the grand and famous home of the Cleveland Orchestra: Severance Hall in the beautiful University Circle neighborhood. The classical exterior of the 1931 building includes organ pipes in the pediment above the main entry. The interior is pure Art Deco splendor. The big 4-manual **Skinner organ from 1931**, Opus 816, with 86 stops and 94 ranks, was originally in chambers 41 feet above the stage, speaking downward. Eventually it fell into disuse, and was walled up, thus preserving it. The hall was renovated in 2000, and the organ was moved to new chambers at the back of the stage. Jack

M. Bethards was the consultant, and the Schantz organ company renovated the instrument, giving it modern solenoid drawknobs and a multi-level combination action. A façade of 43 non-speaking pipes graces the organ's front. The console, painted a deep blue, with ivory and walnut colored Art Deco trim, was front and center on the stage.

The recitalist was **Thomas Murray**, university organist and professor of music at Yale University. He opened with *Toccata in F Major*, BWV 540, by J. S. Bach, slowly allowing the organ's sound to grow and blossom. His flawless sense of rhythmic pulse and immaculate technique propelled every phrase. He made the most of those marvelous deceptive cadences. The powerful 32' reeds came on at the end, leaving us breathless. We had all fallen in love with this organ, and the concert could have ended right there. But we were grateful that there would be more.

Next came Hindemith's *Sonata I* (1937), written six years after this organ's debut. Murray made the most out of this organ's many fine solo voices. His approach was more orchestral, more dynamic than the usual. The *Sehr langsam*, for example, began with a plaintive cry from the Choir organ's Contra Fagotto 16' played one octave higher. Some of the softer foundation stops were heard, then the Orchestral Oboe—beautiful E. M. Skinner sounds. *Phantasie, frei* featured good contrasting sounds. It ends, of course, with *Ruhig bewegt*, soft-

ly reminding us of the first movement. Murray's pace and choice of color were perfect. The *ppp* ending on the Choir strings was deeply moving.

Regina Pacis from Guy Weitz's (1883–1970) *Symphony I on Gregorian Themes* (1932), a good period piece for this organ, contained the Gregorian *Ave Maria*. I loved the soft 16' pedal stops, Dulciana and Gamba, speaking with precision and presence. It grew to a loud dynamic. Instead of a sacred hymn, we sang a hymn to music: Schubert's *An die Musik*, a practice they have at Yale graduations. It was a fine touch. For a brief moment we were all Yalies!

After intermission, Murray played *Movement* by Jean Berveiller (1904–1976). Only a few minutes in length, it packs a lot of music with a truly riotous pedal part. He concluded with Calvin Hampton's transcription of Franck's *Symphony in D Minor*. It sounded wonderful in this room, which has just enough reverberation to make the detached chords ring. Murray's legendary console technique and registration skill were on full display. One also had the sense that this instrument clearly inspired him. The strings and soft reeds are to die for. The Oboe, English Horn, French Horn, and so forth are the stuff of genius. Thank God we still have this instrument's voices intact as Skinner left them. This symphony, written for orchestra, makes a great organ piece; the transcription was excellent. Thomas Murray played it magnificently. His playing on this glorious and historic masterpiece of an organ—brought back from near extinction—is what the Organ Historical Society is all about. We were all deeply moved by that realization.

My hat is off to the planners of this convention. It ran like a clock. Endlessly fascinating instruments and venues kept us constantly entertained. The hotel was terrific, as was the food. The performers outdid themselves. The *Atlas* is a great document: kudos to Rollin Smith, Jonathan Ambrosino, Stephen Pinel, Stephen Schnurr, Scot Huntington, and Joseph McCabe for an outstanding job. The photography of William Van Pelt, Victor Hoyt, and Len Levasseur will provide inspiration for years to come. Next summer is Pittsburgh (information: <www.organsociety.org>). I can't wait! ■

Frank Rippl is a graduate of Lawrence University Conservatory of Music, where he studied with Miriam Clapp Duncan and Wolfgang Rübsam. He is co-founder of the Appleton Boychoir, coordinator of the Lunchtime Organ Recital Series in the Appleton, Wisconsin area, and has been organist/choirmaster at All Saints' Episcopal Church in Appleton since 1971.

Photo credit: William T. Van Pelt, III



National Association of Pastoral Musicians

Thirty-Third Annual Convention

July 12–16, 2010 • Detroit, Michigan

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<h4>Institutes</h4> <p>Chant Institute Monday–Friday Anthony Ruff, <i>osa</i> Handbell Institute Monday–Friday Donna Kinsey and Jean McLaughlin Choral Institute Tuesday–Thursday Kent Tritle</p>																

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