

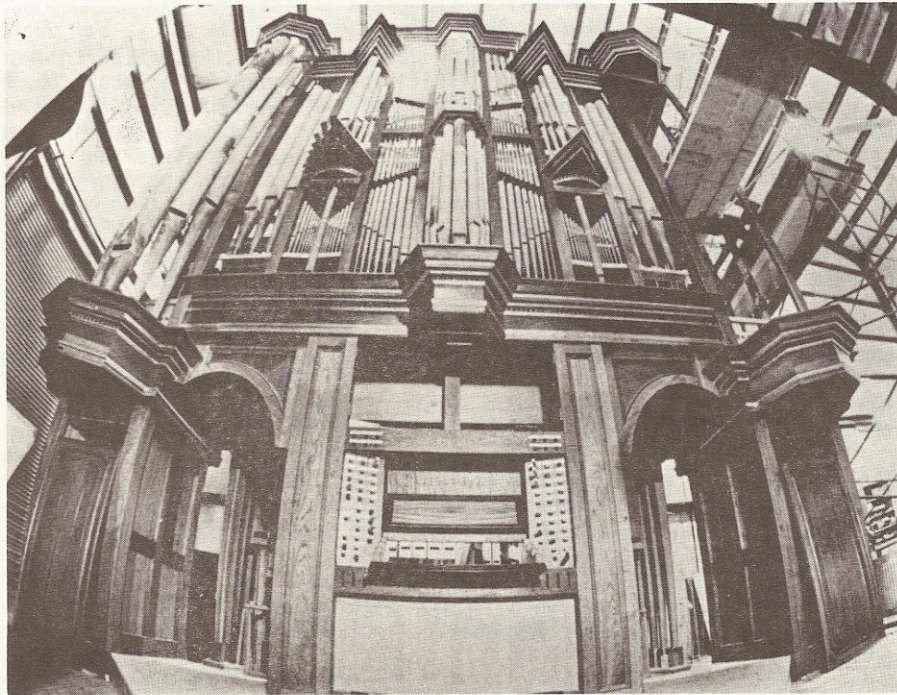
# The International Adventist Musicians Association

## *Newsletters*

*Spring 1985*

### *Southern Adventist University*

#### *Pipe Dream Comes True*



*The three-story Opus 26 was assembled first in Oregon in the construction studio of builder John Brombaugh. The pipe organ is currently being reassembled and voiced in the Collegedale SDA Church. (Photo by Rosanne Olson)*

The long wait is over ...

The crowd cheered as the two trucks rolled into the parking lot of the Collegedale Church and the choral group, Die Meistersinger, struck up a tune of thanksgiving. The organ had arrived.

Together the college and the Collegedale congregation had waited seven years for this organ while it was being painstakingly hand built by masters of the craft. A full three stories high, the Opus 26 is the largest tracker organ built in North America in this century, boasting 4,926 pipes and 70 stops, a significant fact because it is the number of stops, not pipes, that defines the scope of an organ.

Although it is not physically the largest *pipe* organ in North America, it is by far the largest *tracker* pipe organ. A tracker is built after the fashion of the great organs of Europe from the 16th and 17th centuries.

These organs have thousands of slender wooden linkages, known as "trackers," which connect the keys to the individual pipe valves, and the stops to the ranks of pipes. The music created by such an arrangement is different both technically and aesthetically from that produced by an electronic organ where the keys are connected to the pipe valves by wires and electrodes.

In spite of an electronic age that suggests the biggest and best organs should be products of electronic wizardry, many organ builders have fought the tide of modern technology and have returned to the craft that made the truly great sounds of the organs back in Bach's day.

John Brombaugh, the builder of the Opus 26, is one of these master builders who prefers the Old World sounds. He and his crew of technicians operate a workshop in Eugene, Oregon, where the Opus 26 was constructed and then disassembled for transport to Collegedale.

Although Brombaugh's firm is one of 20 currently producing tracker organs in America, he is probably one of the most sought-after builders. While other firms have teams of personnel who devote their full attention to one particular stage of production, similar to the process on an assembly line, John Brombaugh oversees all areas of engineering, construction, and voicing (or tuning), thus ensuring total quality control. His organs are modeled after Baroque-era instruments made in northwest Germany and Holland.

"That's why we chose John Brombaugh to build the organ," says Judy Glass, associate professor of music at the college. "He does the voicing of the organ personally, giving each pipe individual life and character. This is a very important step in bringing a tracker organ to its proper full throat."

Brombaugh is a rigorous and exacting engineer, according to Mrs. Glass, whose views are supported by current literature on the subject. Brombaugh holds an engineering master's from Cornell University and held his first job with the organ division of the Baldwin Piano and Organ Company in Cincinnati, trying to combine his love for music and his skill for

mechanical design. He created several electronic innovations for the company, many for which they still hold patent rights, but he became disillusioned with electronic organ music after listening to recordings of historic European organs.

He eventually decided to pursue the almost-forgotten discipline of tracker organ construction, and after apprenticing with several world-renowned builders and doing a six-month journeyman'ship with Rudolf von Beckerath in Hamburg, Brombaugh set up his own workshop.

The Opus 26 has more than a few unusual features. Its pipes, unlike most pipes today, are not composed of tin, but of lead. While in Europe, he had an old organ pipe analyzed and discovered to his amazement that the basic element was lead. In accordance with the Old World standards, his technicians forge their own lead pipes by hand in a small foundry located in his workshop.

The organ also carries a glockenspiel, or complete set of 36 bells, also operated by trackers connected to the keyboard.

The keys are covered by cowbone, which does not yellow with age as does ivory. The beautifully designed wooden housing for the organ is made of fumed white oak. The original wood carvings were executed by one of Brombaugh's staff specialists. Many of the large pipe openings and carvings are gold-leafed with 24 carat gold. The organ's longest pipe is 32 feet long, a posane reed pipe made of wood.

The Opus 26 was purchased in 1978 for \$400,000 as a joint college and church project, but its current value has risen to \$1.2 million. Considering that the organ has an estimated lifespan of 300 years (compared with the 40-year lifespan of most electric pipe organs), the investment is considered by many to be a sound one.

Not only will the quality of campus music instruction increase, but the church congregation will be blessed with musically enhanced worship services. And the organ's impact on Chattanooga's cultural community has already been felt. As a campus visitor commented while looking in on the installation, the Opus 26 will put Chattanooga on the map for fine arts development.

It took Brombaugh's staff of technicians six weeks to reassemble the organ in the church once it arrived by truck from Oregon. Brombaugh himself will live on campus for up to six months while he performs the most critical stage of assembly—individually voicing each pipe to match the acoustics in the church.

Plans call for a dedication ceremony and opening concert when the organ is fully voiced and ready to play, probably in late summer or early fall. John Brombaugh hopes to have some of the voicing complete in

time for Bach's 300th birthday, which will be celebrated throughout the world on March 21. Up until that time, the congregation will be treated to hearing a few pipes at a time as work progresses.

In addition to the massive Opus 26, the college has also purchased a smaller Brombaugh creation, the Opus 27, for its music recital hall. The Opus 27 has two manuals, 13 stops, and is one of only six mean-tone tempered instruments built in the 20th century. It will be voiced at the same time as the Opus 26.

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## **The International Adventist Musicians Association**

### ***Newsletters***

***Summer 1986***

**Southern Adventist University**

**Organ Dedications at Southern**

OREGON DEDICATIONS AT SOUTHERN

During a week of special concerts and workshops by world-renowned organists April 23-27, the Anton Heiller Memorial organ was dedicated on the campus of Southern College of Seventh-day-Adventists in Collegedale, TN.

Named after the late Anton Heiller, Viennese organist, composer, harpsichordist, and improvisator, the organ is the largest accomplishment to date in the new organ building trend that is sweeping the country. The Heiller organ stands three stories high with 4,926 pipes, four keyboards, 70 stops, and a glockenspiel, or set of bells.

Concerts and workshops were given during the dedication week by the following organists:

KLAAS BOLT has been the church organist of the Grote of St. Bavo church in Haarlem, Holland, since 1953. He also teaches organ at the Sweelinck Conservatory in Amsterdam. As an advisor to the Organ Committee of the Dutch Reformed Church and the Institute of the Preservation of Monuments, he is involved in the restoration of many valuable historical organs in the Netherlands.

PETER PLANYAVSKY is the organist and music director for St. Stephens Cathedral in Vienna, Austria. He is also a professor of organ and improvisation at the Hochschule für Musik in Vienna. He is a former student of Anton Heiller. Planyavsky has been a winner of several international organ improvisation competitions.

WILLIAM PORTER is a professor of organ and harpsichord at New England Conservatory and Oberlin Conservatory. His understanding of performance practice has attracted many students, and he is in constant demand as a performer and lecturer.

MICHAEL RADULESCU is a professor of organ at the Hochschule für Musik in Vienna, a professor of organ at the International Summer Courses in Liechtenstein, and a professor at the International Academy of Ancient Music in Innsbruck, Austria. He was also a student of Anton Heiller, and has played concerts and taught master classes in Europe, the United States, Canada, and Australia.

LEONARD RAVER has been a professor at the Juilliard School of Music since 1975 and the official organist of the New York Philharmonic since 1977. He is in demand as a concert organist and has given many premiere performances of new compositions. He performed the three top compositions of the Organ Composition Competition as part of the dedication.

HARALD VOGEL is director of the North German Organ Academy and director of church music for the Reformed Church of Northwest Germany. He is also a professor at the Hochschule für Musik und Theater in Hanover. Harald

Vogel has been responsible for the restoration and preservation of many instruments in North Germany and Holland. He has greatly influenced contemporary organ building in the United States.

Brombaugh's smaller creation, the Opus 27, was also dedicated. The dedication featured a concert by William Porter, professor of organ and harpsichord at the New England and Oberlin Conservatories.

The Opus 27 is a meantone instrument with two manuals and 13 stops, one of only six meantone organs built in the 20th century. The organ is housed in Ackerman Auditorium, a two-story music recital hall that seats 200.

Meantone tuning was used back in the 16th and 17th centuries by composers of early Baroque and Renaissance music. As opposed to equal temperament, which provides an equal distance between tones and easy transposition from one key to another, meantone tuning is based on the mathematical proportion of the perfect third and makes use of few flats or sharps.

In this system, the octave is divided into 15 tones rather than 12. The three extra notes in each octave are achieved by splitting three of the black keys so that each can produce two different pitches. The black key between G and A, for example, is divided into two different notes--G-sharp and A-flat. The A-sharp and B-flat, and the D-sharp and E-flat are also differentiated in this split-key method.

Because meantone tuning was standard throughout the early Baroque and Renaissance periods, the Opus 27 gives the musician astonishing insights into the way early compositions were conceived. Chromatic passages, for instance, take on a pungent and striking character that is lost on modern instruments. The distinct personality of early compositions is revealed on a meantoned instrument.

The dedication event attracted between 8,000 and 9,000 people. Attendees came from around the world to attend what was considered to be the most significant musical event in the history of Southern College.

The organ compositions contest attracted thirty-three entrees from Canada, France, and the United States. First place was won by Naji Hakin from Paris, France, and second and third places by two U.S. composers.

Michael Barone of American Public Radio recorded all dedication events and will rebroadcast them in a series of eight or nine programs of "Pipe Dreams" beginning in September, 1986. This program is broadcast on over 200 stations. He commented to me that he had enjoyed being here and the Sabbath service "was a very moving experience, one of the most meaningful dedications I have ever attended." Several visitors suggested that the sermon by Gordon Bietz on "Christianity and Aesthetics" should be printed in some major national professional journals.

Erna Heiller, widow of Anton Heiller, son, Bernhardt, and his wife, Inga, were on campus for the occasion. It was their first visit to the United States. They were deeply moved and expressed appreciation about the hospitality and friendliness on campus.

Comments from performers and persons in attendance:

"This single event (the dedication recital series and workshops) will affect organ building and organists in America for years to come."

Over and over--"Thank you for inviting us to share this with you. This is a 'world class' event."

"My estimation of Seventh-day Adventists has gone up 400% as a result of this event."

"Collegedale is no longer a tiny spot on the map; it is known throughout the world."

Many said "Please invite us back! We enjoyed our stay; it was so inspirational. Your conference center is nice, and everything was so well organized."

At the final concert, Harald Vogel said, "There are only one or two other places in the world where the organ music of five centuries can be heard the way it was heard when it was written, and Southern College is one of those places."

Michael Barrone, producer of "Pipe Dreams" on American Public Radio, said, "This is a musical event of world consequence that has drawn an international audience. Especially enjoyable was the Sabbath service, which I found to be a moving experience. This was one of the most meaningful dedications I have ever attended."