

Windlines

a newsletter of the American Organ Institute at the University of Oklahoma

Fall 2007

<http://music.ou.edu/>

Principal Chorus

Dear Alumni and Friends,

It hardly seems possible that a year has passed since I joined the faculty of this wonderful school. As many of you know, the past year has been challenging, and I appreciate the expressions of concern during my wife's eight-month hospital stay. Such an experience is no way to start a new job, but the wonderful support and encouragement from Fine Arts Dean Eugene Enrico, Music School Director Steven Curtis, my students, colleagues, and alumni helped me to make it through the year with some significant accomplishments to report. I also want to extend my gratitude to my esteemed colleague and predecessor, Dr. Clark Kelly. The kindness and hospitality of him and his wife Linda to the "new kid on the block" helped ease our transition.



I am happy to report that my wife has returned home and is recuperating. She is an inspiration to me and we both have a renewed sense of gratitude for each new day of life!

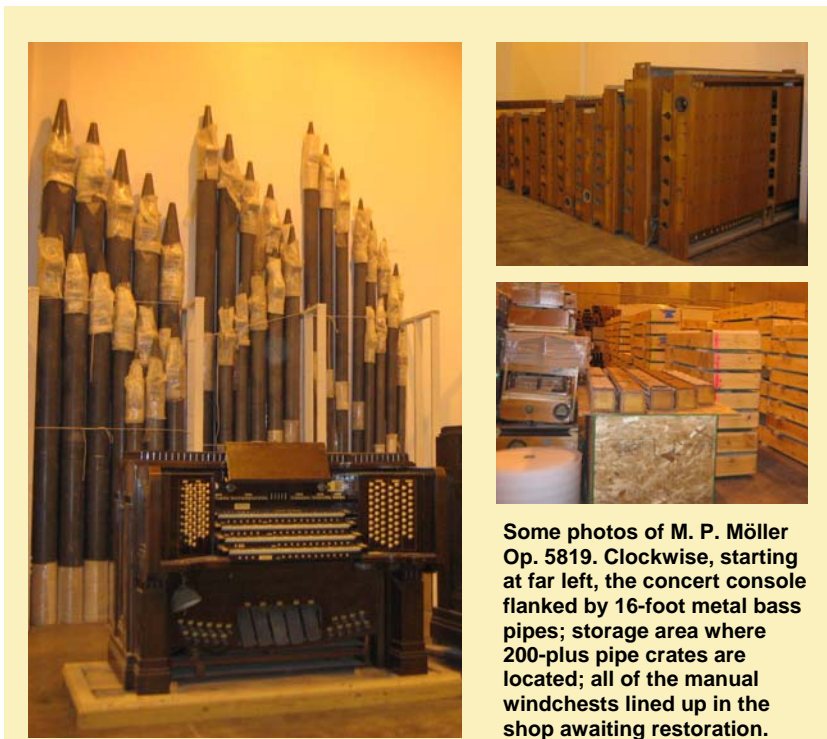
I hope to welcome all the alumni to Norman this coming October for a unique reunion event. We want to celebrate your lives in music and your connection to OU! On Thursday, Oct. 11, there will be a luncheon at the new AOI shop facility, followed by a shop tour. At the luncheon, I will outline the progress we have made over the past year in student and staff recruitment, as well as facilities. I will also outline the overall vision of the American Organ Institute at the University of Oklahoma: Honoring the Past, Embracing the Present, Fostering the Future!

There will be opportunities for "open console" at the Fisk organ in Grayce B. Kerr Gothic Hall on campus, as well as some reminiscing about your days at OU and studying with Mildred Andrews Boggess. That evening, I will present a symphonic improvised accompaniment to the classic 1928 silent film "The Phantom of the Opera," starring Lon Chaney. This event will be in Gothic Hall and open to the public.

I hope you will put Oct. 11-12 on your calendar for a return to Norman. I look forward to welcoming you back to OU and sharing with you about OU's return to being a premier institution for the study of the pipe organ.

I hope you will enjoy this first issue of our newsletter.

**Dr. John Schwandt,
AOI Director**



Some photos of M. P. Möller Op. 5819. Clockwise, starting at far left, the concert console flanked by 16-foot metal bass pipes; storage area where 200-plus pipe crates are located; all of the manual windchests lined up in the shop awaiting restoration.

Shop Corner

An organ technician with experience at some of the most prominent organ shops in the country has joined the American Organ Institute as shop manager.

John Riester comes to OU with an impressive resume. Most recently, he served as service manager for Berghaus Organ Co., Bellwood, Ill. He also has worked for Goulding and Wood in Indianapolis and Martin Ott in St. Louis.



Riester

Riester is working on re-assembling and restoring the M.P. Möller pipe organ donated to OU by the University of Pennsylvania, as well as managing other shop activities. The internationally unique organ, which weighs approximately 50 tons, has two consoles and approximately 6,500 pipes, the longest of which measures 35 feet. The organ and its pieces are in the AOI workshop on north campus. The massive instrument eventually will be installed in Catlett Music Center's Paul F. Sharp Concert Hall.

"The first months have included acquiring supplies for the shop and completing preliminary administrative work. There is a great deal of excitement as we prepare to start the rebuilding of the instrument," Riester said.

Future issues of *Windlines* will feature updates on the Möller restoration and AOI updates.

Riester will be available to meet alumni at the October event. Joining Riester in Norman are his wife, Sara, and 6-month-old

At the American Organ Institute - Fall 2007

September 29, 7 p.m. in Gothic Hall. Boggess Series Event: Professor Caroline Smith (mezzo-soprano) and Professor Carla Edwards (organ) from DePauw University, Greencastle, Ind., will perform works for voice and organ

October 11, 8 p.m., Gothic Hall. The 1928 silent classic, "The Phantom of the Opera" starring Lon Chaney Sr., will be screened with live organ accompaniment by Dr. Schwandt.

October 19, 12:30 p.m., Gothic Hall. The new monthly noontime recital series will continue with performances by students and community organists. These recitals are free and open to the public, who are invited to bring their lunches.

December 7, 12:30 p.m., Gothic Hall. Another in our monthly noontime recitals.

December 9, 7 p.m., Gothic Hall. "Holiday Pipes": Continuing on last year's success, Dr. Schwandt will collect holiday themes from the audience and weave them into spontaneous musical creations.

Accommodations on the basis of disability are available by College of Fine Arts Box Office at (405) 325-4101.

Keys to the future



Colleague Dr. Timothy Olsen of Oklahoma City University and the Oklahoma City Chapter of the American Guild of Organists sponsored a successful Pipe Organ Encounter event that included stops at the Mildred Andrews Boggess Memorial Organ in Catlett Music Center (with chances to play the organ, left, and see it up close and inside, above right) and the AOI Organ Shop. Twenty young students, some newcomers to the organ, spent several special days studying, listening, and playing area pipe organs. The program is designed to introduce the next generation to the beauty and wonder of pipe organs.

From the Administration



I'm delighted to report that one of my very first appointments to the School of Music faculty was Dr. John Schwandt. His vision for the American Organ Institute, combined with his genius as organist, persuaded our search committee that he is the perfect choice for us. OU President David L. Boren asked us to build the finest organ program in the country. President Boren and I are both convinced that John, through his vision for the American Organ Institute, will accomplish just that. I hope you will lend your support in this important mission.

Thanks to the donation from the University of Pennsylvania, OU will have a performance organ like no other in the world, a centerpiece befitting its equally unique new organ program. As all of you know from your personal experiences here, the University of Oklahoma has historically been a leader in organ education and performance. With the development of the American Organ Institute and the acquisition of this wonderful instrument, OU is once again demonstrating its leadership in this important area. I am eager to personally share my enthusiasm with all of our cherished alumni at the organ reunion event. I hope to greet each of you in October.

Dr. Eugene Enrico
Dean, Weitzenhoffer Family College of Fine Arts



I am extremely pleased that Dr. John Schwandt has joined the OU School of Music as our new Professor of Organ. Dr. Schwandt is an outstanding performer, teacher, and visionary. The *American Organ Institute* has been a dream of his, and, due to the support of OU President David L. Boren, it is becoming a reality. The acquisition of the Möller Pipe Organ and the wonderful opportunities that it will give the School of Music will be limitless. Having an organ of this quality in our major performance hall will allow music to be performed here at OU that hasn't been possible for a long time.

I hope that you can come to the campus in October to see and hear the wonderful things that are happening in the organ program at the University of Oklahoma. I look forward to seeing you.

Dr. Steven Curtis
Director, OU School of Music

Piping in. . .

(Editor's Note: With each issue of *Windlines*, a current or former organ student will be asked to write a guest column. Doctoral student Bradley Fitch comes to OU via Oberlin College and Indiana University.)

When John Schwandt came to me in the spring of 2006 with the news that he was leaving Indiana University to become the new organ professor at the University of Oklahoma (and that I was invited to go with him), I was a little taken aback. I had specifically chosen to study with Dr. Schwandt while pursuing a doctoral degree at Indiana University, and his moving created an obstacle in my path. Admittedly, I knew very little about the state of Oklahoma or the university, and my mind immediately conjured up images of cowboys roaming the plains and tumbleweeds blowing in the wind. I was, however, interested in continuing my studies with Dr. Schwandt, and after hearing about his plans and vision for the *American Organ Institute*, I decided to investigate further.

Upon visiting Norman, I was struck by both the welcoming attitude within the School of Music and the obvious enthusiasm for the organ program and its new professor. At a time when many departments are under fire for a variety of reasons, it was very refreshing to see a real desire for this department to grow and the willingness to invest the resources necessary for that growth. After further thought and investigation, I decided to follow my teacher across the country and join him at the University of Oklahoma.

A year has passed since we came to Oklahoma, and our development plans are well under way. The school already has wonderful organ facilities, thanks to the work of Dr. Clark Kelly and the legacy of Mildred Andrews Boggess, and, with the newly completed organ shop and the instrument going into Sharp Hall, we will soon have some of the best collegiate facilities in the country. It is an exciting time here not only for the organ department but also for the School of Music as a whole. The administration and faculty are a joy to work with, and I am especially pleased to count some of my fellow Oberlin alumni among their ranks. The school is growing, with fresh young talent already here as both students and teachers and more coming in.

All of this contributes to a wonderful atmosphere where students can learn and grow. I initially came here because I believe in Dr. Schwandt's vision and passion, but I also found a wonderful academic and social environment where I have personally flourished. I competed in my first major competition this year (the Arthur Poister Competition), where I earned second place, and have plans to enter more. The work we are doing is not happening anywhere else and will have far-reaching effects on the organ world and, I hope, the music world in general. The pioneering spirit that led the early settlers to this area is alive and well at the University of Oklahoma, and I am looking forward to what the future will bring.

Bradley Fitch

Positive to Great

Special congratulations to Robby Greenlee (BM, 1975; MM, 1978), the newly appointed Director of Choral activities at OU. Welcome home, Robby!

Please update us on your accomplishments and successes! Send in your news announcements by Nov. 1 for the next issue of *Windlines* due out in December. Alumni news can be mailed to John Schwandt, 500 E. Boyd, Room 138, Norman, OK 73019, or emailed to jschwandt@ou.edu