



Windlines

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

December 2007 (Volume 1, Number 2)

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

Principal Chorus

Fall 2007 has been a very busy semester for us here at OU. I was so privileged to meet and speak with some of our alumni at our reunion event this past October. I hope we will be able to organize another reunion event in the near future. Performance engagements and other appearances took me to different parts of Oklahoma, Montana, Indiana, Pennsylvania, and New York this semester. As you know, this kind of visibility is important in letting people know around the country the exciting opportunities unfolding in Norman, Oklahoma! As many of you prepare for the inevitable onslaught of holiday concerts and activities, I hope you will take a moment and give thanks for the opportunities we each have to bring the unique beauty and inspirational sounds possible only on the pipe organ to listeners wherever they might be found.

I remain humbled by the opportunities that lay before us here at OU in regards to further developing our vision for the *American Organ Institute*. Allow me to share a few of the steps that have already been taken towards that goal:

- Increased interest by prospective students from around the country to study at OU. I hope to report a marked increase in enrolled organ majors next year.
- Formation of an advisory committee to assist in new curriculum development
- Increased advertising in the trade journals
- Increased community presence in the organ area at OU. For instance, there were 10 different concert performances on the Fisk organ in Gothic Hall by faculty, students, and guests this semester alone.
- The new A.O.I. Shop is nearing completion and readiness for restoration and maintenance work.
- Following key presentations to various boards of directors, we have garnered support from organizations such as the American Institute of Organbuilders and the American Theatre Organ Society.
- Plans set for a portion of M. P. Möller Op. 5819 to be playable in Sharp Hall by the Fall semester '08.

The stage is set. Plans are underway. Progress has been made. We enjoy the essential support of our administration. Time is of the essence and we must strike while the "iron is hot." The only barrier that exists towards fulfilling our pioneering vision is money. We are ready to embark on a large development campaign necessary to fully fund the complete Sharp Hall Möller project as well as the Institute in general. I hope you will join us in that effort. I encourage each of you to eagerly accept the challenge to act; consider ways in which you can help OU rise to the forefront of pipe organ studies! Together, we can accomplish our goals.

I wish you the peace and joy of the Holiday season and hope that you will take time to enjoy the company of family and friends. These relationships and experiences are the true treasures of our lives. Happy Holidays!

Dr. John Schwandt,
AOI Director



Möller Op. 5819 "toy counter" awaiting restoration

AOI Website Live

The American Organ Institute website (<http://aoi.ou.edu>) went "live" at the end of October. The site has information about the origins of the institute, the instruments, upcoming projects, faculty, staff, technicians, and much more.

Shop Corner

The Fall has been a busy time. The AOI shop is nearly set up with power tools, work stations, and other equipment. Soon we will focus our attention on restoration of chests, pipes, and other parts of Möller Op. 5819. The preliminary architecture designs are completed and are awaiting approval. Early in 2008 both consoles will be moved to the inner lobby of Sharp Hall for display. We are making plans to have a portion of the Möller playing in temporary chambers within Sharp Hall by the Fall semester '08. Please check the AOI website, where you can learn more about these and other developments as they occur.

John M. Riester,
AOI Shop Manager



Pipes and parts in remote storage next to the organ shop

At the American Organ Institute - Winter 2007

December 7, 12:30 p.m., Gothic Hall. Monthly noontime recital.

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.

January 20, 8 p.m., McFarlin Memorial United Methodist Church. Dr. Cathy Rodland (Faculty, St. Olaf College) in recital celebrating the 20th anniversary of the Noack organ.

January 31, 12:30 p.m., Gothic Hall. Monthly noontime recital. (Note: Spring 2008 recitals are all Thursdays).

February 16, 10 a.m., Pitman Hall (OU Catlett Music Center). Lecture by Greg Bover (C. B. Fisk); an informative talk covering some distinctive design features of recent Fisk instruments in the United States and abroad. Following the lecture will be a recital by students of Dr. Schwandt (OU) and Dr. Olsen (OCU) in Gothic Hall.

March 6, 12:30 p.m., Gothic Hall. Monthly noontime recital.

April 3, 12:30 p.m., Gothic Hall. Monthly noontime recital.

May 1, 12:30 p.m., Gothic Hall. Monthly noontime recital.

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

Technician's Corner

Why AOI?

As a native Delawarean I've often been asked by friends, family, and business associates why I'd travel 1,250 miles as the crow flies and spend weeks at a time away from home working on a pipe organ. The answer is not a simple one it turns out.

I began organ lessons during 2nd grade but gave them up upon starting high school. A year later I would become one of a handful of student volunteers to remove a theatre pipe organ from a Philadelphia theatre and reinstall it in my high school. My interest in electricity led to me to being responsible for the 85-plus miles of wiring required for the instrument's transplant. That effort opened doors to an electrical engineering degree with a minor in physics. A 25-year career with DuPont and involvement with numerous pipe organs over the years prepared me for many of the things I've become involved with at the American Organ Institute. In forming the American Organ Institute the University of Oklahoma has created a vision that I whole heartedly embrace for the future.

Some suggest that if I wanted to work on pipe organs then there must be a restoration project nearby that might more than satisfy my desires. However, OU's Möller Opus 5819 project represents more than "just another organ project". What attracts my interest is the diverse array of engineering, mechanical, carpentry, electrical, and hands on activities that this particular pipe organ project will require. There's also the opportunity to work and learn about such things as the organ's roll player that, due to its rarity, only a few understand.

While I initially expressed interest in the electrical and electronic aspects of the OU project, my involvement has expanded into a multitude of other contributions. With a 50-ton organ goes figuring out how to properly install it and, more importantly, working with architects and knowledgeable organ technicians to determine the optimum installation. I enjoy working with wood and I've been lucky enough to work with Shop Manager John Riester in determining the woodworking tools needed. In my first year of participation with AOI the tasks I've been involved in have been diverse and often challenging.

As an Adjunct Professor at the local technical and community college I'm accustomed to working with students. The fact that AOI's curriculum will expose organ students to what goes on behind the keyboards and stops is something most organ performance studies never involve. I've already had the opportunity to work alongside two great OU graduate students and I'm looking forward, as the program expands, to sharing my skills and knowledge with others.

As one who has fully restored a Stanley Steam Car, my interests in historic preservation and education are also satisfied by involvement in this project. The theatre pipe organ is one of only two musical instruments invented in North America. I feel the theatre organ has been largely neglected both at the instrument level and for its place in our American musical heritage. While the OU Möller has a significant historical past in its own right, the OU vision seeks to complement the School of Music's existing classical organ study with the study of theatre organ with the Möller and other theatre organ builder's instruments further preserving the art on theatre pipe organ playing and silent film accompaniment.

So why AOI? The answer resides in the challenges, the vision, the opportunity for historic preservation, education, and a great group of people to be involved with. Having joined the AOI team as a contractor shortly after Möller Opus 5819 arrived in Norman, and after the first year of exciting challenges, I look forward to contributing to the program's expansion in 2008 as it gains momentum and visibility.

Robert E. Wilhelm, Jr.



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 Craig Sproat comes to OU via Concordia University Wisconsin and Indiana University.)

As the semester and year come to a close, one of the things that has struck me most in the recent months is the genuine excitement and interest in the organ program at OU, both within the school and in the larger community. This past year we have performed with both instrumental and choral performers, and the most encouraging aspect is that we were approached and asked to participate. The organ occupies a unique place within the music world since it so firmly planted in both sacred and secular music and thus has a very wide range of possibilities for performance. Knowing that the other areas of the School of Music want to collaborate with us is encouraging because it means that the organ is not viewed as a novelty; rather, it is a truly integral part of the community.

Within the community outside OU, there also exists a curiosity about the program. Last March I was getting my hair cut, and when I told the barber I was an organ student at OU, he was excited and asked how the new organ was coming along. This past weekend I accompanied a regional high school choral concert in Texas, and the director, Dr. Paul Tucker from Kansas University, was very interested when I told him about the unique aspects of the program, and he suggested greater contact between KU and OU. As the organ program at OU continues to grow and become more widely known, its multifaceted nature gives it a unique edge and will allow it to become a leader in both the performing and academic worlds.

Craig Sproat

From the Development Office

Your private partnership in the American Organ Institute is vital to our success. Your gifts to the AOI will ensure that students will have the best creative and educational opportunities available anywhere in the U.S. Gifts can be made to the AOI in the following ways: matching gifts, gifts of cash, securities, real estate, life insurance, deferred or planned gifts. For more information, contact Linda Tiller, Director of Development for the Weitzenhoffer Family College of Fine Arts, 405-325-7376 or ltiller@ou.edu

Positive to Great

Professor John Schwandt was a featured artist on a recent broadcast of Pipedreams. A link to the broadcast can be found in the About AOI section of the AOI website, under "In the News".

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

Created by the Oklahoma Territorial Legislature in 1890, the University of Oklahoma is a doctoral degree-granting research university serving the educational, cultural, economic and health care needs of the state, region and nation. The Norman campus serves as home to all of the university's academic programs except health-related fields. Both the Norman and Health Sciences Center colleges offer programs at the Schusterman Center, the site of OU-Tulsa. The OU Health Sciences Center, which is located in Oklahoma City, is one of only four comprehensive academic health centers in the nation with seven professional colleges. OU enrolls almost 30,000 students, has more than 2,000 full-time faculty members, and has 20 colleges offering 152 majors at the baccalaureate level, 160 majors at the master's level, 80 majors at the doctoral level, 38 majors at the first professional level, and 18 graduate certificates. The university's annual operating budget is \$1.2 billion. The University of Oklahoma is an equal opportunity institution. (11/15/06)

The American Organ Institute is a department within the Weitzenhoffer Family College of Fine Arts (<http://finearts.ou.edu>) and the School of Music (<http://music.ou.edu>).