



Windlines

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

June 2008 (Volume 1, Number 4)

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

Principal Chorus

Special greetings to all of our alumni and friends! The weather has been wonderful in Norman lately; the season of spring reminds me of new beginnings and renewed hopes and dreams. It is definitely springtime for the organ program at the University of Oklahoma. In this issue of *Windlines*, I hope you will enjoy reading about all of our progress at the school as well as at the shop, which is now fully equipped and running at full throttle! For many organists, summer is normally a time for preparations and retreats, conventions and vacations. I wish all of you well in these endeavors. Please take the opportunity to apprise us of your whereabouts and important things going on in your lives; we want to hear from you! I will be attending the AGO Convention next month and ATOS Convention in July. I hope to personally greet those of you also planning to be there.



There has been an explosion of activity here at OU with the organ program and I am happy and humbled to report some of our progress. First and foremost is the most important newsflash—this coming fall, **there will be 18 organ students!** I am proud of this accomplishment in less than two years. I hope you will be as happy about this as I am. Only two of the total number of talented auditionees decided not to attend OU. However, both of these students expressed interest in doing future degrees here. The confidence and enthusiasm demonstrated by these talented young people for the American Organ Institute speaks directly to the important work we are doing and bodes well for our future. I should like to think that there are other students out there who might like to take part in this momentum. I need to extend special thanks to Dr. Steven Curtis and Dean Eugene Enrico for the essential support in helping to attract these fine students to OU. This is very much a team effort and we are all trying to help each other.

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 highlights of progress towards our goals:

Recruitment

- After auditioning students from Minnesota, North Carolina, Florida, Pennsylvania, Indiana, Oklahoma, and Washington, D.C.. We will have a total of 18 organ students next fall, nine of them organ majors.

Interdisciplinary participation.

- We have a mixture of students and volunteers working at the shop from many different areas of study and levels of experience.

(Continued, page 2)

Shop Corner

During this academic year, we have procured and set up tools, set a course for our first restoration project, increased the personnel working in the shop from two to 18, and are nearing the half-way point on restoration of a temporary portion of the instrument, dubbed the “Mini Möller,” to be installed in Sharp Hall later in 2008. Revamped curriculum is being developed in both organ performance and organ technology areas. By the fall of this year, there will be a bachelors and masters student in organ technology. As far as we know, OU is the only place where these degrees are available.

My work for the Institute includes organizing the shop and personnel, keeping track of all aspects of restoration, making sure the school instruments are properly maintained, overseeing the assembly of the quarterly newsletter *Windlines*, and other administrative duties. All who contribute to the Institute have unique gifts and talents to share, are excited to contribute to a one-of-a-kind program, and take great pride in their work. This valuable combination makes my job exciting, even during times of stress.

The upcoming year is full of great potential, but also great challenges. Plans are being made for open house tours later this year and the Mini-Möller commissioning in early 2009. You are invited to keep up with the progress through *Windlines* and the AOI web presence, at <http://aoi.ou.edu>.

John M. Riester,
AOI Shop Manager

Diping in...

The thought of ever learning to play such a marvelous instrument seemed unattainable to me. Since a very young age I longed to study the organ, but for one reason or another never pursued it. I can recall being given a tour of the organ in my home church, First Baptist in Dallas, and being completely awe-struck. This admiration for the organ haunted me throughout my college years. I reached a turning point this past March when I saw the two Möller consoles on display in the Paul F. Sharp Concert Hall. I could no longer contain my enthusiasm. (Continued, page 2)



An unknown future: Both consoles (and all four tuning keyboards) from M. P. Moller Opus 5819 await long term storage on the floor of the Philadelphia Convention Hall after being removed by Organ Clearing House.

At the AOI – Summer 2008

No events are currently scheduled for the AOI during the summer of 2008. Please check the Website for the latest updates

Principal Chorus

Continued from Page 1

Curriculum development

- The B.M.A. in Organ Technology degree curriculum has been completed and is going through the approval process. The first B.M.A. candidate in Organ Technology begins studies this fall
- Sacred Music curriculum revision is under way and will apply to all three degree tracks: B.M., M.M. and D.M.A.

Church Music Internships established

- This is an essential part of our new sacred music curriculum, allowing our students to gain practical experience and mentoring “in the field” concurrent with their academic studies.
- We now have positions created and students placed at internships in Methodist, Lutheran and Roman Catholic churches in Norman. We hope to expand this program to other churches in the near future with the goal of having a wide denominational landscape represented.

Community outreach

- We are assisting some Norman churches by providing maintenance services for their pipe organs. They are assisting us by allowing our students, under professional guidance, to learn essential maintenance skills in real situations.
- We have given special concerts, tours and open house events at the shop to promote awareness and interest in the community. Several community members have stepped forward and are enthusiastically volunteering their time at the shop every week.

Development

- This is perhaps the most important area in which we are working. The funding and endowment of the AOI is essential for its survival. With the help of the University Development Office, we are embarking on an ambitious, but exciting, campaign to ensure our bright future.
- Applications and letters of interest are being assembled and sent seeking grants and financial sponsorships for the AOI program, in particular, scholarships and Möller Opus 5819.

The stage is set and progress has been made. I invite you to join us in our pioneering vision to “Honor the Past, Embrace the Present, and Foster Our Future!” Happy summer!

Dr. John Schwandt,
AOI Director



Some of the local and national technicians contributing to the AOI: (back left) Brantley Duddy, Stephen Russell, John Schwandt, John Riester, Dan Sliger, (front left) Robert Wilhelm, John Goulding and Pauletta Stowe. These individuals have 225 years of collective experience.

Positive to Great

Please update us on your accomplishments and successes! Send in your news announcements by Aug. 1 for the next issue of *Windlines* due out in September. Alumni news can be mailed to American Organ Institute, 500 E. Boyd, Room 138, Norman, OK 73019-3131, or e-mailed to aoi@ou.edu

This copy of *Windlines* is not in color...

Previous hard-copy issues of *Windlines* have been in full color, thanks to donated copy services. The AOI must now fully support all future costs for *Windlines*, including assembly, printing and mailing. As a cost-saving measure, the decision was made to print in black and white at this time. Newsletters are still available in full color online. Thanks to private donations, this issue is printed without use of state funds. Interested in assisting the AOI in publications cost? Please consider a gift to the American Organ Institute. For more information contact the AOI at (405) 325-7829.



Both consoles await full restoration and are currently on display in their future home, Sharp Hall (theatre console above)

Diping In...

Continued from Page 1

I spoke with Dr. Schwandt that very afternoon about joining the organ studio in the coming fall semester and beginning my studies. Dr. Schwandt's attitude towards this idea surpassed all my expectations and I was very encouraged about what I was now venturing into. At that point, all the reasons I had thought not to do this were gone. Through our conversation he learned of my woodworking experience and promptly contacted the shop manager, John Riester. After a short time I found myself working among people who are very passionate about the Möller project. I consider it a great privilege to work with everyone in the shop.

I am now nearing the end of my degree program pursuing a bachelor of instrumental music education. Deciding to undertake this new field of study is both exciting and in some ways overwhelming. I have no doubt that under Dr. Schwandt's direction my education will be higher than I could have expected. I am looking forward with anticipation to starting my organ studies and equally excited about my education in the AOI shop. AOP's expectations are high and their standards are impeccable. I find every day a new challenge and an opportunity for growth.

Dan Sliger

(Bachelor of Instrumental Music Education student Dan Sliger recently started secondary organ lessons and is working full time in the AOI shop this summer.)

The University of Oklahoma is an equal opportunity institution. 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>). This publication, printed at the AOI shop, is issued by the University of Oklahoma. 250 copies have been prepared using donated funds at no cost to the taxpayers of the State of Oklahoma.