

HILBUS CHAPTER
THE ORGAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.
Where the Tracker Action Is!
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**Saturday, August 27th Crawl to Three Churches in
Alexandria, Virginia**

9:30

Fairlington Presbyterian Church, 3846 King Street, Alexandria, Virginia 22302. Austin organ 2005 – 2 manuals 23 ranks – electro pneumatic/ universal wind chests. The church is located on King Street (Virginia Rt. 7) just east of I-395. Traveling east (towards Alexandria) on King Street, turn right at the first light (Menokin Drive) to the church on the left. There is parking behind the building.

There will be a short annual business meeting at this church for our members. The nomination committee reports the slate of officers as follows: Chairwoman: Carolyn Booth; Vice Chairmen: Michael Britt; Secretary/ Treasurer: Barbara Birckner

11:00

Fairlington United Methodist Church, 3900 King St. Holtkamp organ – 2 manuals – mechanical action.

The church is located on the west side of Menokin Drive at King St. adjacent to Fairlington Presbyterian. Walk across the street.

12:30

Roberts Memorial United Methodist church, 606 A South Washington St. Wilson Reilley tracker organ of 1893, 6 ranks

Turn right from Menokin Dr. onto King St. Follow King all the way into Old Town Alexandria. Turn right onto South Washington St. Proceed 6 blocks and park somewhere in the area. Do not use the church parking lot.

Sunday, June 26, Theater Organ Recital

By Barbara Birckner

It was a lovely drive out to Great Falls, Virginia to the home of Jack and Mildred Hartman. A large group of about 100 of us gathered to hear Michael Britt play the Opus 2035 Wurlitzer theater organ installed in their grand organ music studio. Michael delighted the crowd with a medley of Irish music, a sing-along featuring popular songs of pre World War II as well as modern pieces from Stephen Sondheim.

The organ's history goes back to 1929. The first home of the organ was Paramount Pictures in Hollywood, California. When talking pictures came into being, the organ was no longer used and in 1942 it was shipped to a San Francisco radio station. After years of service it landed in private hands in 1953. The Hardmans bought the organ and began the multi year restoration process.

The 4 manual console is located at one end of the studio. At the opposite end are the pipe chambers enclosed with swell shades. The studio is most impressive for its size and multiple uses as a workshop, garage and restoration center.

We thank the Hardmans for their gracious hospitality and obvious dedication to preserving a piece of popular music history and Michael Britt for making this day a special occasion.

The OHS Convention in SE Massachusetts

By Carolyn Booth

The OHS Convention in SE Massachusetts – The Old Colony – was really great! The Hilbus Chapter was very well represented with 33 of our members in attendance. Of those, 27 were from our local area. Two members performed in recitals: Tom Guthrie, assisted by Tommy Lee Whitlock, in one of the pieces; and Peter Crisafulli. Both Tom and Peter showed their instruments beautifully by performing appropriate literature for each organ. All of us can be very proud of our chapter!

The OHS has something new on their website. It is the OHS Pipe Organ Database. The exciting part of this endeavor is the role that Hilbus Chapter has played and will continue to play. The reviews in our newsletter of the organs we visit each month are part of this database and have contributed greatly to the OHS Database for this part of the country.

To access the database, go to <http://www.organsociety.org> and click on OHS Pipe Organ Database. Then click on Search for Organs. You can update information on a particular instrument that you know by clicking on Contribute Information to the

Database, then to Submit Additions and Updates. If you have any questions, you can contact the Database Committee through the OHS Home Page.

It is exciting to know that our monthly crawls reach a much wider audience of organ enthusiasts and researchers alike. Thank you Hilbus Chapter members for all that you do. Give yourself a pat of the back!!

News and Information

Concert organist, Ken Cowen, will play a recital on the beautiful 3 manual, 61 rank Steiner-Reck organ at St. Luke Catholic Church, McLean, Virginia, September 12th at 8:00 PM. This event celebrates the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Northern Virginia Chapter AGO. The church is located at 7001 Georgetown Pike, McLean, Virginia.

The seventh Gottfried Silbermann organ playing competition has been held in Saxony. Thirty-two organist from sixteen countries participated. They were from West and East Europe, the US, Canada, South Korea, and Japan. The competition is held every two years to praise the work of the famous Saxon organ builder, Gottfried Silbermann. Young organists come from all over the world to experience playing music on these instruments. The Gottfried Silbermann Society which has designated September 9 through the 25th as Gottfried Silbermann days sponsors the competition. Thirty recitals are planned for this time. It is the largest organ festival in central Germany. Fifteen organists from Germany and foreign lands will be performing. Other events occurring between the 9th and 20th of September will be honoring Friedrich Ladagast on the centennial of his death and Zacharias Hildebrandt who apprenticed with Silbermann. These recitals- symposiums will be held in the Erzgebirge (ore mountains), Thuringia and Brandenburg. At the same time a symposium will be held about the work of restoring the Silbermann organ in the Petri-Kirche in Freiberg. Work on this instrument is to be finished in 2007.

From the June issue of "The Diapason" p 18 St. Catherine's Church, Hamburg excerpts from an article edited and expanded by Joel H. Kuznik

"For over two centuries, St. Catherine's, one of the five principal churches of Hamburg built in 1250, had an organ historically associated with Scheidemann, Reincken and J.S. Bach. Until its destruction in 1943 during World War II, it was among the foremost instruments in northern Europe. Christoph Wolff in his Bach biography states, "The organ of St. Catherine's was the most famous and most beautiful large instrument in north Germany." Now more than 60 years later, it is about to be reconstructed with some of the original surviving pipe work dating from the 16th and 17th centuries."

Fortunately 520 of the original pipes were saved from destruction. They will form the basis for realizing the reconstruction. Additionally there are photographs, drawings with exact dimensions of the console and chest layout and the 1720 stop list.

Mr. Kuznik goes on to say: "St. Catherine's distinctive organ played a significant role in Johann Sebastian Bach's life. He probably became acquainted with the organ and its legendary organist-composer, Johann Adam Reincken (1623-1722) for the first time in 1701 during a visit to Hamburg. From Easter 1700 to 1702 Bach attended St. Michael's school in nearby Luneburg, and it was probably Georg Boehm, organist of St. Nicholas in Luneburg, who introduced Bach to Reincken. Reincken was an engaging personality known as an avid collector of manuscripts, and apparently there was an immediate chemistry that brought him and Bach together a number of times. It is through Reincken that Bach also became acquainted with Buxtehude....."

In 1720 Bach visited Hamburg again, this time to explore professional opportunities, including the position of organist of St. Jacobi's and the music directorship of the five principal churches. During his stay Bach gave a highly celebrated organ concert at St. Catherine's which was prearranged, advertised and apparently attended by such prominent people as Erdmann Neumeister, the cantata librettist and senior minister at St. Jacobi and Johann Mattheson, music director of the Hamburg Cathedral. Bach's obituary describes in detail:

'During this time, about the year 1722[sic], he made a journey to Hamburg and was heard for more than two hours on the fine organ at St. Catherine's before the Magistrate and many other distinguished persons of the city, to their general astonishment. The aged organist of this church, Johann Adam Reincken, who at the time was nearly a hundred years old, listened to him with particular pleasure. Bach, at the request of those present, performed extempore the chorale "An Wasserfleussen Babylon" at great length (for almost half an hour) and in different ways, just as the better organists of Hamburg in the past used to do at the Saturday vespers.

Particularly on this, Reincken made Bach the following compliment: "I thought this art was dead, but I see in you it still lives." This verdict of Reincken's was the more unexpected since he himself had set the same chorale, many years before, in the manner described above. Our Bach knew this and was also aware that he (Reincken) had always been somewhat envious of him.'

Bach's student, Agricola, writes: 'In many old organs in Germany, for example in that of St. Catherine's in Hamburg among others,... the number or reed stops is quite large. The greatest organ expert and performer in Germany and perhaps in Europe, the late Kapellmeister Bach, was a great admirer of such organs: if anyone knew what and how to play upon them, it was he.

The organ of St. Catherine's Church in Hamburg contains no less than 16 reed stops. J.S. Bach, the late Kapellmeister of Leipzig, having once played for two straight hours on what he called a magnificent work of art, could not find high enough praise for its beauty and variety of sonority. It is also well known that the former organist at this church, Mr. Johann Adam Reincken, always personally maintained it in perfect tune.....

The late Kapellmeister Bach of Leipzig reported that the response of the 32' Principal and the Posaune pedal stop was uniformly good and quite audible down to the lowest C. He also said that this principal was the only one of its size he had ever heard of such a high quality.'

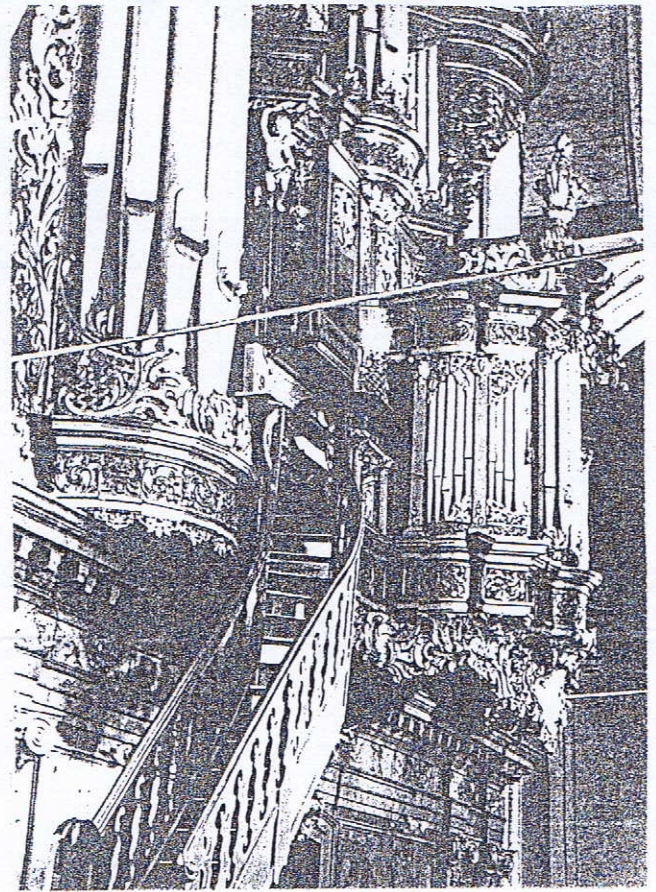
Mr. Kuznik: "The significance of these comments by Bach should not be underestimated. Frankly, Bach never made comparable detailed statements about any other instrument he admired, and therefore it is reasonable to conclude that this organ at St. Catherine's, which Bach had known since his mid-teens, played a major influence in forming his own ideas about sonority."

The organ's great reputation was celebrated by numerous great pre Bach builders and organists/composers. It is a great pity that more of it wasn't removed to safety before 1943. After all, Lubeck's magnificent organ heritage was obliterated the year before. Most likely the political climate of the time played a part. Probably anyone advocating the removal of organs from churches would face the stigma of a lack of patriotism or faith in the final victory of Nazism. The world still has the Schnitger at St. Jacobi's. It was dismantled and stored in time to avoid destruction. That church is only a few blocks away from St. Catherine's.

To copy the instrument the cost will be 2.6 million US dollars or 2 million euros. The restoration contract has been awarded to the Flentrop firm in the Netherlands.



St. Catherine's interior view toward organ before its destruction
 Photo: Museum of City History, photo archives



St. Catherine's view of detail of organ case
 Photo: Museum of City History, photo archives

Hauptwerk [11 stops]

- 16' Principal
- 16' Quintadena
- 16' Bordun
- 8' Oktave
- 8' Spitzflöte
- 8' Flauto traverso
- 4' Oktave
- 2' Oktave
- Rauschpfeife III
- Mixtur VI, VII-IX
- 16' Trompete

Rückpositiv [13 stops]

- 8' Principal
- 8' Gedackt
- 8' Quintadena
- 4' Oktave
- 4' Kleinhohlflöte
- 4' Blockflöte (or 2')
- 1½' Quintflöte
- 1' Siffelot
- Scharf VIII
- Sesquialtera II
- 8' Regal
- 8' Baarpfeif
- 4' Schalmey

Oberwerk [11 stops]

- 8' Prinzipal
- 8' Hohlflöte
- 8' Viola di gamba°
- 4' Flöte
- 2½' Nasat
- 2' Waldflöte
- 2' Gemshorn
- Scharf VI
- 8' Trompete
- 8' Zincke
- 4' Trompete

Brustwerk [8 stops]

- 8' Principal
- 8' Gedackt°
- 4' Quintadena
- 2' Waldpfeife
- Scharf III-VII
- 4' Oktave
- 16' Dulcian
- 8' Oboe d'amore

Pedal [17 stops]

- 32' Principal
- 16' Principal
- 16' Subbaß
- 8' Oktave
- 8' Gedackt
- 4' Oktave
- 4' Nachthorn
- Rauschpfeife II
- Mixtur IV
- Cimbel III
- 32' Groß-Posaune
- 16' Posaune
- 16' Dulcian
- 8' Trompete
- 8' Krummhorn
- 4' Schalmey
- 2' Cornet-Baß

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Dues: Due in October, Send \$10.00 to Secretary-Treasurer. (NOTE: Please make out checks to Hillbus Chapter, OHS)