

Hilbus Chapter

The Organ Historical Society, Inc.

Where the Tracker Action Is!

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Saturday, June 23, 2007

Three Unique Pipe Organs of the Bel Air, Maryland area

[THANKS TO KEVIN CLEMENS FOR ARRANGING THIS DAY!]

10:00 AM

Christ the King Presbyterian Church

10 Lexington Road
Bel Air, MD 21014

Reuter Pipe Organ, Opus 2203 (installed 2000)

This is one of the very few Reuter Pipe Organs found in the Baltimore area. A small organ of 11 ranks, it is very versatile and fills the small sanctuary. Larry Mentzer is the organist and host. Church members have requested to attend to hear us play the organ. Bring your organ music and organ shoes.

Directions:

Interstate 95 - North toward New York. Exit at 77B toward Bel Air on to MD 24 North. Stay in far right lane and merge on to MD 924 which is Emmorton Road; turn on to Lexington Road. Christ the King Presbyterian Church is on right hand side of Emmorton Road and parking is in the back on Lexington Road.

11:15 AM

First Presbyterian Church

224 North Main Street
Bel air, MD 21014

Austin Pipe Organ, Opus 2339

[crawl information continued next page]

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Dues due in October: \$14, mailed to Secretary-Treasurer (Checks payable to Hilbus Chapter, OHS)

This is a large 2-manual pipe organ of 26 ranks in a medium size sanctuary. Julie Hall is the organist and host. Again, church members will attend to hear us play this instrument.

Directions:

Leave Christ the King Presbyterian Church parking lot by going southwest on Lexington Road toward Emmorton Road. Turn right onto Emmorton Road which is MD 924 and follow MD 924 North. You will go through the downtown of Bel Air (Main Street) on your two mile journey; First Presbyterian Church is on the left. Across the street from the First Presbyterian Church is Emmanuel Episcopal Church.

12:30 PM

Lunch at Main Street Tower Restaurant

located at 29 South Main Street, Bel Air, MD
Italian / American Cuisine <www.tower/belair.com>

Directions:

Leave the First Presbyterian Church parking lot and turn left - going South toward US 1 and then make an immediate left onto West Courtland Street. Turn left onto South Main Street - MD 924 North. (You will have passed this restaurant on the way to the First Presbyterian Church.)

2:00 PM

St. Ignatius RC Historic Church

533 East Jarrettsville Road
Forest Hill, MD 21050

1884 Hook and Hastings Pipe Organ, Opus 1238 (Cost \$1,400)

Located in the historic church (built in 1792), this mechanical-action instrument was recently restored and is still used for Masses, weddings, and funerals. Since the parish has grown over the years a new church was built in 2001 and does not contain a pipe organ. James Foxwell is the director of music and host.

Directions:

From the restaurant go Northwest on North Main Street / US 1 Business Route/ MD 924 toward East Broadway. Continue to follow MD 924. Merge onto US 1 North / Bel Air Bypass toward Philadelphia. Turn left onto Conowingo Road which is US 1 Business Route. Go to second traffic light (past International Harvester). Turn left onto East Jarrettsville Road. St. Ignatius Church is at your immediate left on the corner of Business Route 1 North and East Jarrettsville Road.



SECRETARY-TREASURER'S REPORT FROM THE MAY 19, 2007 BUSINESS MEETING

President Carl Schwartz opened the meeting with the election of officers for 2007-2008. Bob Hobbs (as chair of the nominating committee) reported that the current officers had agreed to continue in office for another year: Carl Schwartz, President; Kevin Clemens, Vice President; and Barb Birckner, Secretary-Treasurer. The slate was unanimously accepted by the voting members.

Barb Birckner reported that there are 72 paid members, and there is a bank balance of \$1,089.72. She stated that expenses are significantly reduced now that a majority of the newsletters are being delivered via e-mail. After some discussion, members voted to retain the current dues level of \$14 per year.

[continued next page]

Carl Schwartz announced that plans for an OHS national convention in the Washington, DC area are in very early stages. No date has been decided. Carl also stated that he is looking for people interested in helping to design the monthly organ crawls; June and August crawls are planned (there is no crawl during July because of the National convention), but people are needed from September onward. The meeting was adjourned so that members could see and hear the new Oberlinger organ.



Our May crawl took place on a simply glorious Maryland spring day – brilliant, cool and breezy. The first visit was to an old friend: Hook and Hastings Opus 702 of 1873, now located at St. Paul’s Moravian Church in Upper Marlboro, Maryland. This is a real beauty, no doubt about it, and deserving of a good hug, which it received. Some may recall the joint crawl with Potomac AGO a few years ago and this writer had the immense pleasure of presenting a recital on this organ.

ST. PAUL’S MORAVIAN CHURCH

GREAT - 58 NOTES

8' Open Diapason
8' Stopped Diapason Bass
8' Melodia Treble
4' Octave
2 ²/₃' Twelfth *on former Dulciana*
2' Fifteenth *addition*

SWELL - 58 NOTES

8' Stopped Diapason Treble
8' Stopped Diapason Bass
8' Viola
4' Flute Harmonic
8' Oboe *1-12 addition*

PEDAL - 27 NOTES

16' Bourdon
Swell to Pedal
Great to Pedal
Manual Coupler
Tremolo
Balanced Swell Pedal (not original)



The organ, originally located in the basement chapel of Trinity Church, Copley Square, Boston, Massachusetts was relocated at some indeterminate time to a building eventually occupied by Rising Mount Zion Church in the District of Columbia. From that location it was moved to Upper Marlboro. It has been enlarged several times. Additions include a matching bottom octave for the Swell Oboe 8' and a 2' Fifteenth in the Great. At the time of the recital mentioned previously the Dulciana was replaced by a 2 ²/₃' Twelfth. Present plans include restoration of the windchest table and enlargement of the Swell to include a Voix Celeste 8' using the Dulciana pipes, a new Violina 4' and a preparation for a 2' Flute. The changes have been made by and the ongoing care of the organ is in David Storey’s capable hands. Well into its second century this mighty little organ continues to grow!

The organ features a 58/27 compass. The swell-shade mechanism was converted at some time from a hitch-down mechanism to the present balanced swell pedal. The touch with the manual coupler engaged is quite heavy; due to the tonal balance it is not needed as often as one might think. The voicing of the organ is rich and robust. The Diapason is darker in tone than one might expect for an 1873 Hook and Hastings. One wonders if it was revoiced at a later time, perhaps when the organ was moved to Washington, DC. The Swell is entirely

[continued next page]

subsidiary in strength to the Great, and with the full Great only the Swell Oboe makes any contribution to the ensemble. The added Twelfth and Fifteenth compliment the original pipe work.

Thanks are due to Barbara Masters, Organist and Music Director of St. Paul's for her hospitality on the occasion of this visit to the organ.

We traveled a few miles north to visit another fine organ at Trinity Episcopal Church in Upper Marlboro. This is a 1909 J. W. Steere & Sons instrument. It was altered by chapter member and founder James Baird at the time it was installed in the church. The result is a highly effective organ of great beauty.

TRINITY EPISCOPAL CHURCH

GREAT MANUAL I - 61 NOTES

8' Melodia

8' Viola

4' Octave

Mixture II [12-15] *breaks on d#3 and c#5*

Signal

SWELL MANUAL II - 61 NOTES

8' Stopped Diapason

8' Oboe-Gamba

4' Flute d'Amour

2' Fifteenth

8' Trumpet

PEDAL - 30 NOTES

16' Bourdon

8' Octave

Great to Pedal

Swell to Pedal

Swell to Great



This organ is massively and solidly built. The modern tonal scheme is balanced and versatile with every stop contributing in some way to the ensemble and various combinations. Jim Baird revoiced the flute stops and they are full of vitality. The Melodia is a chameleon, serving with the Great Viola as a rich foundation to the ensemble and at the same time possessing some of the tonal character of a Harmonic Flute. The Oboe-Gamba is a true string of the orchestral type. The original Open Diapason serves in the Pedal where it imparts definition to the bass line and expands the repertoire that may be played on this instrument. The Trumpet is the only disappointment; this was installed as an inexpensive compromise. It actually is a fine Cornopean rank from a Tellers-Kent organ and thus probably made by Gottfried. In this instance it is soft and somewhat slow to speak, a sure indicator that it was intended to speak on higher pressure. Jim explained that the Swell windchest has major problems with splits that open up in the winter. Our visit was an occasion to discuss the advisability of pursuing the repair of this part of the organ or further to replace the Swell windchest and add a Celeste and suitable reed, both desired by the organist. The organ possesses a 61 note manual and 30 note pedal compass as well as a comfortable action; in this regard it is as modern as many new mechanical-action organs.

Following a hearty lunch we traveled to Bob Hobbs' church, Friendship United Methodist Church in Friendship, Maryland, to examine, hear and play the new Oberlinger organ recently installed there. We began with the annual meeting, reports and election of officers [see page 2 for report of the annual meeting].

[review continued next page]

OBERLINGER ORGELBAU
Windesheim, Germany
installed November/December 2006

MANUAL I – C-c⁴ 61 NOTES

Principal 8' 78% tin, partly in facade
Rohrflöte 8' C-b wood; from c¹ 40% tin, hammered
Offenflöte 4' 70% tin
Principal 2' 70% tin
Sesquialter II 2 2/3' + 1 3/5' 70% tin
Mixture III 1' 70% tin

Manual II – C-c⁴ 61 NOTES

Gedackt 8' 40% tin, hammered
Salicional 8' 70% tin [C-B from Gedackt 8']
Vox coelestis 8' 70% tin, from Tenor C
Gedacktflöte 4' 33% tin
Sesquialter II 2 2/3' + 1 3/5' from Great
Oboe 8' 70% tin
Tremulant
Zimbelstern

PEDAL – C-g¹ 32 NOTES

Subbass 16' wood, 56 pipes
Gedacktbass 8' extension
Flötbass 4' extension

COUPLERS

I-Pedal
II-Pedal
II-I



Arriving as the organ was being played we were greeted by surprisingly lush and warm tones from this German-built cabinet organ. The classic and compact appearance of this organ does not prepare the listener for the aural experience at all. The 8' and 4' stops of this organ each have a melodic and pleasant tone. The speech is focused, clean, but not excessively articulate. These tones combine into a rich and friendly sounding ensemble. The upperwork brings out the clarity of this organ without any screech or harshness, but rather evokes the clear bell-like sonority of Middle Rhine organs. Mention should be made that the Offenflöte of Manual I, a rank of high tin content, is a dual purpose stop. Its tone lies in a middle ground between pure Principal and Flute tone. This contributes to the warmth of the combined 8' and 4' flues.

This instrument does have string tone: Salicional and Celeste. This is the surprise – the “lush” factor – if you will. The effectiveness of these ranks by themselves and combined with the foundations is an effective response to our American taste for orchestral warmth in organ tone.

The Pedal stops are derived from one rank of stopped wood pipes; this is a feature of several types of small Oberlinger organs. In this organ the Great 8' Principal is carried down to low C in open pipes. Some versions of this compact design use stopped pipes for the lowest octave but here the height allows the open pipes to run full compass. The one reed in the organ does not impress at first hearing. It is mild and somewhat neutral and buzzy in tone, essentially colorless. However, it has a remarkable effect when combined with other stops. Used with the full organ one hears the illusion of a much larger specification.

This organ, it might be noted, is tonally more refined than some of the older examples of Oberlinger's work in this country. Those examples often exhibited the mixture-dominated clang of mid-20th Century Orgelbewegung

instruments; those from the 1970's and 1980's are not universally admired. The clear ringing Germanic chorus is available at Friendship but in superior balance with the foundation stops. This is a different sound.

One of our visitors then took us on an aural excursion with music I doubt the builders of this organ ever imagined would be played upon it. We heard a number of snazzy theater and pop organ selections. The organ is still in one piece, the wind remained rock steady, and it was really quite convincing as a make-believe Wurlitzer.

The church opted for the 61/32 AGO compass and configuration offered by the builder. As a result there is little need to adjust to a German BDO dimension – one can simply play without second guessing where the feet and hands are in relation to what one is used to. The action is precise, quick, and easy to play. Better still, the case is so configured that the player is not aware that he or she is practically on top of the pipes with resulting aural trauma. It is as appealing in tone at the key desk as at a distance. The case is handsome and a rotating star attached to a bold zimbelstern is located at the top center of the display. If anything at all is lacking it would be Swell expression; there was simply no depth available to incorporate this, nor was it required by the church. There are case doors that can be closed for a pianissimo effect. The organ builds up and decrescendos with remarkable smoothness. For much of the organ literature this is adequate. There is a wide dynamic range available with this organ in addition to good color variety. Superbly crafted and painstakingly voiced, it is an excellent example of modern small organ design.

Thanks to Bob Hobbs for hosting this visit and making arrangements for the day's activities.

– Carl Schwartz



**St. Paul's Moravian
painted front pipes**



**Friendship Methodist
right stop knobs**



**Trinity Episcopal
key desk**

Dates to remember:

June Crawl - Saturday, June 23rd

July - No CRAWL (National Convention)

Deadline for August Newsletter

Monday, August 13th