

# Hilbus Chapter

The Organ Historical Society, Inc.

*Where the Tracker Action Is!*

www.hilbus.org



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## TWO BALTIMORE ORGANS

arranged by Kevin Clemens

**Saturday, January 24, 2009**

**10:00 a.m.**

**Christ Lutheran Church**

701 South Charles Street, Baltimore, MD

Andover Pipe Organ, Opus 114 -2007 - 3 Manual and Pedal - 82 Ranks

### **Directions I-95 North to Baltimore**

Exit #53 onto I-395 North (Downtown, Inner Harbor, Baltimore)

Stay left at the split with Martin Luther King Blvd.

Bear right at the first light onto Conway Street

At the third light, make a right onto Light Street

Make the first right onto Lee Street and a left onto Charles Street.

The church lot is on the left.

### **I-70 East to Baltimore.**

Take exit onto I-695 South towards Glen Burnie

Stay on I-695 until you get to I-95

Take I-95 North to Baltimore **then as above**

### **I-83 South towards Baltimore**

Continue on I-83 South until you reach the second light in Downtown

and make a right onto Lombard Street.

At the third light, make a right onto Lee Street and then a left onto Charles Street.

Church lot is on the left.

*Continued on Page 2*

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Articles and news may be submitted to the Editor electronically: [ruxtoncar@aol.com](mailto:ruxtoncar@aol.com) - Deadline is the 5th of the month  
Dues due in October: \$14, mailed to Secretary-Treasurer (Checks payable to Hilbus Chapter, OHS)

**11:30 a.m.**

Walk to nearby restaurants or the Cross Street Market.

There are plenty of places to eat in the Cross Street Market and if you have never been there it is something to walk around and see all the vendors.

**1:15 p.m.**

**The Church of the Advent (Episcopal)**  
1301 South Charles Street, Baltimore, MD

This pipe organ is a mystery and perhaps we can determine the original builder. It was rebuilt by the Mudler-Hunter Organ Company of Philadelphia. It is two manuals and pedal. Edith Ho, while a student at the Peabody served as organist-choirmaster.

**Directions** Walk to Charles Street from restaurants or Cross Street Market to church.  
The church is found on South Charles Street and West Ostend Street.

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### November 2008 Crawl Review

by Paul Birckner

Eight members gathered on the morning of November 22nd to hear, see, and play one of the metro area's most beautiful small organs. **The Karl Wilhelm at Holy Comforter** is a fantastic small tracker instrument. It has successfully led this congregation and served as a recital instrument for many concerts since its installation in 1976. Edgar (Pat) Heflin was the organist at Holy Comforter for over 30 years. Through his efforts the church purchased a new tracker from Karl Wilhelm. The voicer was the renowned Christoph Linde. Mr. Linde has left his mark on our community in other noteworthy projects such as the Rieger at All Souls Unitarian.

The acoustic environment of this Wilhelm organ couldn't be better. The space has only hard surfaces, oak chairs without cushions, tile floor, painted cinder block walls, and a hard plaster ceiling- all in a shoe box shaped space with the organ placed at one end facing into the largest area. The sound is ideal for leading hymn singing as well as playing organ literature. The voicing style is like village organs of 18<sup>th</sup> century north Germany. It is not an overworked smooth sound that city instruments generally have. The tuning is stable. It can easily go 5 years without anything more than a brief touch up. The action is a pleasure to play. It gives back what the organist does in many subtle and revealing ways. This Wilhelm is a little masterpiece. It is built with great integrity and could easily last for many centuries.



GREAT 56 notes  
8' Rohrflöte  
4' Prinzipal  
2' Waldflöte  
1' Mixture III

POSITIV 56 notes  
8' Gedackt  
4' Rohrflöte  
2' Prinzipal  
1 1/3' Quinte

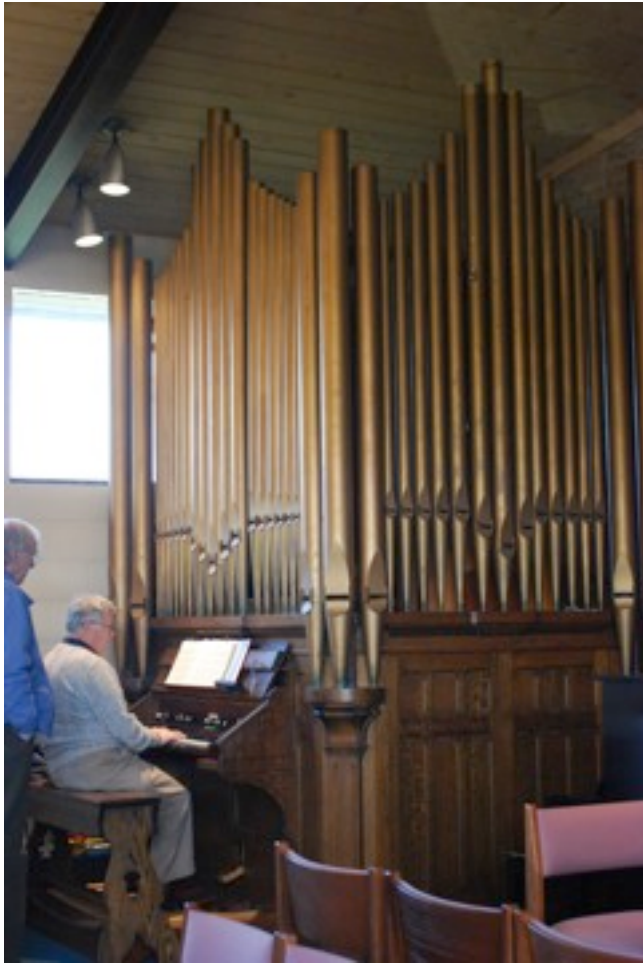
PEDAL 30 notes  
16' Subbass  
8' Bourdon  
4' Choralbass

#### COUPLERS

Positiv to Great - Great to Pedal - Positiv to Pedal  
Free standing casework of solid white oak.

*Opposite: photo by Paul Birckner*

Our next organ located eight miles south on Route 5 was a great contrast in style.



Paul Birckner seated at the Hinners  
photo by Gordon Biscomb

**Hope Lutheran's Hinners tracker, Opus 2275**, is a beautiful early 20<sup>th</sup> century small one manual and pedal church organ. This instrument was purchased December 23, 1987 from Faith United Methodist Church, Geneva, Pennsylvania for \$800. Installation was done with the help of church members, Paul Birckner and the expert help of James Akright. Most manual stops are divided between b and middle c. The exception is the Principal 4'. This rank contains 61 notes and appears to be a later addition. Some time in its past history someone cut off the tops of the pipes to install tuning slides - therefore making the tuning less stable. Carpeted floors and the purchase of cushioned chairs have harmed the acoustic of the room. In spite of these conditions the instrument has a warm sound. It can be very quiet and distant and then, adding the Diapason, will lead a large crowd in solid singing. The pedal Bourdon has the power to match the Diapason.

Manual – 61 notes (divided between b and middle c)  
Mechanical action

8'	Open Diapason	61 pipes (5 wood, 56 metal)
8'	Lieblich Gedackt	61 pipes
8'	Salicional	49 pipes
4'	Flute	61 pipes
4'	Principal (not divided)	61 pipes
	Octave Coupler	
	Tremulant	

Pedal – 30 notes Electro-pneumatic action

16'	Bourdon	30 pipes
8'	Bourdon	12 pipes
	Manual to Pedal Coupler	

### St. John's Episcopal Church, Broad Creek Jacob Hilbus Organ, 1819 by Carl Schwartz

Paul asked me to continue the narrative of the November Crawl with a description of this remarkable little organ. Although I was not present at the crawl both Paul and I have had the pleasure of playing this organ for the Parish Festival recently and on other occasions. The key action is superb and the tone ranges from the delicate Dulciana to a robust but refined tutti. It invites you to play music: period music, any music that can be realized on it. The case top is open and the sound is thrown out into the room. Some associated with St. John's have suggested that it does not make enough sound to support congregational singing or so it seems from the keydesk. Indeed it does!

The organ is signed by Jacob Hilbus, for whom our Chapter is named, in 1819. He states proudly (in German dialect) that the organ was made by him.

Manual 59 keys GGG to f

8' (10 2/3')	Stopped Diapason Bass and Treble
8'	Dulciana Treble
4' (5 1/3')	Principal (stopped wood to Tenor D#)
4'	Flute (from TC)
2' (2 2/3')	Fifteenth Sesquialtera Bass and Cornet Treble

Divided stops split at B/Middle C

Echo Pedal affects Principal, Fifteenth, and Sesquialtera/Cornet Equal Temperament

Original pitch probably sharp (Stopped pipes are all the way flat)  
N.B. Stop names modern and descriptive. Parenthetical pitches give actual sounding pitch at GGG

The organ was donated by Mrs. Elizabeth J. Stone to St. Paul's, Rock Creek Parish, Washington, D.C. in 1890 for use in the Sunday School. It was memorialized to Robert King, Jr., Surveyor of the City of Washington and Dr. Robert King Stone who was the Lincoln family physician and who attended Abraham Lincoln after he was shot at Ford's Theater in 1865.

At some time the Sesquialtera/Cornet was changed out for a Gamba by an unknown party and was heard in this condition at the 1964 OHS Convention. The organ served at Rock Creek Parish until 1928. The writer's friend and colleague the late Adeline Ellin played the "little organ" as a young woman in that place. In 1928 the instrument was loaned to St. John's, King George's Parish, Broad Creek, Maryland which is the mother parish of St. Paul's. It has served there since. Restorative work was undertaken at various times by Lewis and Hitchcock and most recently by James Baird. The organ is now winded by a blower and the original bellows are gone. The Gamba has been removed and the Sesquialtera/Cornet reconstructed using pipes made by Roosevelt. For some years now it has served alongside various electronic organs with more controls, key and pedals. They fade away and it goes on. In the language of our time: Pipe Organs are "sustainable".

John Fesperman wrote of this organ in *The Diapason* (April 1995). His examination of the organ led to the conclusion that the construction and workmanship are similar to the earlier Hilbus organ built for Christ Church, Alexandria. Both organs resemble older English instruments in many ways. The cabinet work is fine but the interior finish has been described as crude or rough. In point of fact this condition is found in many old but fine organs including the beloved Pennsylvania builder David Tannenberg. The proof is the pudding and this organ plays well. It has lasted a long time. The tone of the organ is what one might expect from an early 19th century American instrument: reminiscent of recent English work but with steady voicing and solid pipe speech not found in some older work such as the organs of Snetzler.

This matter is raised because research has produced some evidence that the instrument before us arrived in the US in 1797 from England among the effects of Nicholas King. The Nicholas King organ passed to his brother Robert King, Jr. in 1812 and the assumption is now made by the owners that in fact that organ was given "extensive repair" by Hilbus in 1819. There have been several period experts who have briefly looked at the organ. Their various conclusions are mixed.

Further study is undoubtedly needed to answer a number of questions. Are we talking about one organ with a continuous history or two entirely different organs? Has the history of the organ simply been muddled up? How and by whom was the research conducted and did the researcher understand enough about organs to discern subtleties in the records? It is a reasonable thought that the organ might represent new work by Jacob Hilbus retaining materials from an earlier organ. Where rebuilding leaves off and an instrument becomes substantially new is always a matter of nuance. Perhaps the source material regarding this organ can be further examined in preparation for the National Convention here in 2011.

More importantly, I think, this little gem of an organ has been making splendid music in our community for one hundred ninety years or longer. An artistic product of all those who have cared for it, it is symbolic of our own cultural history. Not merely an historic artifact, its brave and forthright voice is an inspiration and a thing of beauty.



Paul Birekner demonstrating the Hilbus - case opened  
*photo by Gordon Biscomb*

## YOU CAN HELP!

Please contact Kevin Clemens or Tom Scheck if you would enjoy assisting with the planning and organization of a Monthly Crawl. This is a rewarding project.

There are options which range from doing everything on your own to working with existing ideas and setting the crawl up on behalf of the membership.

Please don't hesitate to make suggestions for future programs. There are many surprises out there we don't know about.