



RESONANCE

A NEWSLETTER OF THE EASTMAN ORGAN DEPARTMENT / FALL 2005

News from the Organ Department

by David Higgs

Welcome to the sixth issue of *Resonance*! It's been a hot summer for almost everyone, but the hottest thing for the organ in America is happening right here in Rochester. History was made this summer, when the only full-size antique Italian baroque organ in the Western Hemisphere was delivered to the Memorial Art Gallery of the University of Rochester on University Avenue. As I watched 300-year old pipes being carefully unwrapped, I was reminded of just how significant this organ will be to the generations of organists and music lovers who will play and hear it. It is one of the oldest organs now in America, and its sound will have a profound effect on the musical sensibilities of those who hear it. After touching its keys, I realized that it is not only the sound of this instrument, but also the feel of it that will inform and inspire organists. While the original wooden keys are in remarkably good condition, they are worn down in the places where organists' fingers have touched them for centuries; this causes the fingers of today's organist to fall naturally into those same grooves in the keys. It is quite a physical sensation, a tangible connection to our history. The instrument is a living, breathing, singing work of art, a "recording" of the heritage we all enjoy today. It's the kind of instrument that inspired much of the solo organ as well as ensemble music we hear and play today, whether directly, in Frescobaldi, Rossi, and even



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David Higgs at the Bozeman-Gibson Organ in Asbury First United Methodist Church

The base of the Italian baroque organ; unpacked and nearing its final location in the Fountain Court of the Memorial Art Gallery in Rochester

Scarlatti, or indirectly, in Froberger, Pachelbel, and Bach. It will be the focus for Italian-style instrumental and vocal performances, and will change the way the next generations of organ students experience their heritage, as it brings them closer to the true essence of their repertoire. Hans Davidsson's article will give you more details about his experience in guiding the project, the organ itself, a description of his first performance on it in the Marburg workshop of Gerald Woehl, and preparations for its trip by boat from Germany to Rochester.

As promised, also in this issue you will read three students' perspectives on the January study-trip to GOArt in Göteborg, Sweden, where they worked for two weeks on the magnificent collection of both old and new instruments there. In May, a group of us traveled to GOArt as well as to Vilnius, Lithuania, and our guest John Fenstermaker has written a wonderful recollection of his experience of the trip. Peter DuBois gives an update on the very successful Sacred Music Diploma, and DMA student Michael



Unger provides his perspective on the "improvisation experience" at Eastman.

Please consider coming to the EROI Festival and/or Symposium this October, as it will be significant for all organists. It is the largest single organ event ever sponsored by the Eastman School of Music, and you will not be disappointed. Please take a moment to go to our website, www.rochester.edu/Eastman/EROI, click on EROI Festival 2005, and look through the long list of weeklong events. We want to see you here, and this event needs your support. Please come!

Gerald Woehl presenting the project to visitors at the demonstration concert in the workshop June 3 – in the background the two restored bellows



Italian Organ Sails to Rochester

Report from the Final Workshop Inspection in Marburg, June 3-4, 2005

by Hans Davidsson

Since November 2004 the restoration of Eastman's Italian baroque organ has been performed with increasing intensity and care in Gerald Woehl's organ building and restoration workshop in Marburg (Lahn), Germany. The reference group visited Marburg in January, the workshop team and Edoardo Bellotti undertook several study trips to Italy during the spring, and, finally, at the beginning of June, the organ was ready for the concluding workshop inspection. Saturday night, June 3, was a festive evening of celebration. The organ was played in a demonstration concert in the workshop for invited guests, including the mayor of Marburg, the dean of the University of Marburg, regional representatives from the National Board of Antiquities, and others. Edoardo Bellotti, Harald Vogel, and Hans Davidsson, members of the reference group, performed organ music from Italy, the Netherlands, and Southern Germany; the music was interleaved by the finest Italian wine, food, and fruit.

The sound of the organ was well received by the audience as well as the performers. In fact, and despite the dry acoustic of the workshop, it went beyond our expectations. The ripieno blends well, also with the Contrebassi. Most of the pipes in the ripieno are old (except the treble of the Quintadecima). All the individual stops (Principale, Ottava, Flauto, etc.) have the right character. We were particularly pleased to hear all pipes of the Principale speak and sound with sweet and vocal tone. All the combinations, including the many possibilities with the Tromboncini,

blend well and render convincing characters. The divided stops offer many possibilities to create contrasting sounds, and the Corneto (treble tierce) is sufficiently large in sound to balance even combinations with the Tromboncini in the left hand. The concept comprises not only all the documented register combinations of the Italian tradition but many more ensembles. Indeed, it appears as if one can combine almost any of the stops with another. The concept is convincing and versatile.

Visually the organ is spectacular. For the first time, the lavishly ornamented organ case could be seen with all its parts connected and the crown ornament depicting St. Andrew mounted at the top. In the workshop, with its different levels and rather narrow space, you could walk to the second floor and take a close look at the top ornament. The paint of the organ façade and the organ case, including



We were particularly pleased to hear all pipes of the Principale speak and sound with sweet and vocal tone.

The 22-foot organ case and façade of the Italian baroque Organ

*Hans Davidsson at the
Italian organ*



all gilding on carvings, ornaments, etc., has been restored and secured and the new parts (bass board, music stand and board, and organ bench) have been painted with matching color and in similar fashion to that of the original parts. While the surface appears homogeneous, a close look easily reveals the original paint. The overall impression of the 22-ft. high organ case is actually quite stunning—it is truly a majestic organ case. A support frame of wood had been built at the back of the organ case, and a base board provided to surround the bottom of the case. The organ will be placed on a new and specially made platform in Rochester and against a new back wall filled with sand. Originally it most likely was placed on a balcony with the back against a brick wall, which gave acoustical support for the sound generation. The new back wall filled with sand will have comparable acoustical properties.

We had a memorable and almost magical evening in the workshop. At the end of the concert, Hans Davidsson, on behalf of the Eastman School of Music, the Dean, and the organ faculty, expressed sincere and heartfelt gratitude to Gerald Woehl and all who had been involved in the restoration for the admirable

and successful work that they had performed. The Mayor of Marburg, who initially expressed his concern that the program might be too long, was the last of the guests to leave the workshop a little before midnight!

The following morning the final inspection took place. Its purpose was to observe the restoration work that had been carried out, and to document that the agreement between Woehl and the Eastman School of Music had been followed. Woehl, Monika May, and Simon Buser participated in the meeting, together with Giovanni Pradella, representing the restoration team, and Harald Vogel, Edoardo Bellotti, and Hans Davidsson representing the Eastman School of Music. All details of the organ were scrutinized and many aspects discussed.

The restored bellows, mounted in the bellows frame designed for treading by foot, had been installed in a preliminary way, with shorter wind trunks than will be required in Rochester. The windpressure had been set to 52 mm WC. A wind pressure ranging from 50–55 mm WC had been measured in several relevant organs and is also documented in several sources relevant for organs of our kind.

The pitch had been set to A=465 (20 degrees Celsius) and the

*Edoardo Bellotti selecting
stops for a Ricercar
by Pasquini*



temperament to quarter-comma mean-tone. The façade pipes have all been restored and included in the façade. The corrosion of the front pipes presented a particular challenge in the restoration work. In January 2005 it was not yet clear whether it would be possible to make them sound, and whether they could be integrated in the restored organ. Thanks to the European research program on organ pipe corrosion—COLLAPSE—and, in particular, to Gerald Woehl, who developed a new technique to clean the lower surface of the languids without causing any essential change to the main voicing parameters, it was possible not only to rescue them, but also to revive them and make them speak beautifully, as was demonstrated at the final inspection in Marburg. The organ workshop of Giovanni Pradella in Northern Italy built and reconstructed a Tromboncini 8, modelled after the organ builder Gaetano Callido in Venice.

Several parts of the organ had to be reconstructed. New key and stop action was made according to the typical style of Italian organs from the second half of the eighteenth century, and, in particular, to that of an organ with comparable design (for example with pedal pipes placed on the sides of the organ case) built by Serrassi in the early 1790s. All details of the pedal action were carried out according to this model. The result was quite convincing. The touch is very responsive, elegant, and light.

A well-proportioned music stand was made and attached to the new board that fills the space above the keyboard (the original parts are not preserved). They have been painted with a light green color, which had been detected on some parts of the surface of the frame surrounding the opening. The music stand has been painted black. New stop knobs and a new board of walnut have been made.



The intricate facade of the Italian baroque organ

At the end of the inspection, the reference group members signed a document stating that all the work had been carried out successfully and in accordance with the contract. On June 16, after three days of careful packing, the organ left the workshop in Marburg in two forty-foot containers. On June 27 it left Bremerhaven in Northern Germany, sailing to New Jersey, with an expected arrival date of July 6. On July 18 it arrived in Rochester at the Memorial Art Gallery. The first week of the installation period was devoted to inspection of all parts and preparation for the installation of the organ, together with its wind supply system in a separate room. On July 25 the assembly of the main case began under Gerald Woehl's direction. Edoardo Bellotti visited at the beginning of August to assist in the preparations for final voicing and tuning. Finally, on October 7 the inauguration will take place and the inaugural festival will begin. This event will be unique in North American organ culture, and we cordially invite you to share and participate in this historical celebration. Please plan to join us in the Fountain Court of the Memorial Art Gallery to hear the final results of the first project of EROI Phase One.

***The touch is
very responsive,
elegant, and
light.***

Eastman School of Music and Westfield Center

present the

Eastman Rochester Organ Initiative
Inaugural Festival for the Italian Baroque Organ

October 9–16, 2005, Rochester, New York

*The Newly Restored Eighteenth-Century Italian Organ (anonymous builder)
at the Memorial Art Gallery*

INAUGURAL CONCERTS

Sunday October 9

1:00 P.M. Concert: Hans Davidsson, David Higgs, and William Porter

3:00 P.M. Concert: Tragicomedia and Concerto Palatino (Paul O'Dette, director)
Monteverdi Vespers (The Lutheran Church of the Incarnate Word)

8:00 P.M. Recital: Harald Vogel

MASTERCLASSES AND PERFORMANCES

Frescobaldi–Pasquini–Concertos–Improvisation

Monday October 10

9:00–10:00 A.M. Lecture-demonstration (Italian and German repertory): Harald Vogel

10:30–Noon Masterclass: Harald Vogel

1:30–2:30 P.M. Lecture-demonstration (Frescobaldi): Edoardo Bellotti

3:00–5:00 P.M. Masterclass: Edoardo Bellotti

8:00 P.M. Concert: *Fiori e Fioretti del Frescobaldi*

Edoardo Bellotti and Schola Cantorum Christ Church (Stephen Kennedy, director)

Tuesday October 11

9:00–10:00 A.M. Lecture-demonstration (Frescobaldi): Edoardo Bellotti

10:30–Noon Masterclass: Edoardo Bellotti

1:30–2:30 P.M. Lecture-demonstration (Improvisation): Edoardo Bellotti

3:00–5:00 P.M. Masterclass: Edoardo Bellotti

8:00 P.M. Recital: Italian and German Baroque

Harald Vogel at the Bozeman organ (Asbury First United Methodist Church)

Wednesday October 12

9:00–10:00 A.M. Lecture-demonstration (Pasquini): Edoardo Bellotti

10:30–Noon Masterclass: Edoardo Bellotti

1:30–2:30 P.M. Lecture-demonstration (Improvisation): Edoardo Bellotti

3:00–5:00 P.M. Masterclass: Edoardo Bellotti

8:00 P.M. Concert: Gabrieli in the Fountain Court (organ and brass)

Thursday October 13

11:00 A.M.–1:00 P.M. Open Benches at Memorial Art Gallery and at
The Lutheran Church of the Incarnate Word

1:30–2:30 P.M. Lecture-demonstration (Italian Concerto): Edoardo Bellotti

3:00–5:00 P.M. Masterclass: Edoardo Bellotti

EROI SYMPOSIUM 2005

The Italian Baroque Organ: Context, Instruments, Repertory, Performance

6:00 P.M. Registration, reception

8:00 P.M. Welcome, Introduction and Demonstration of the Organ

Friday, October 14

9:00 A.M. *Art and Music in Baroque Italy*

Nancy Norwood: Italian Baroque Paintings in the Fountain Court

Edoardo Bellotti: Italian Organ Cases from the Sixteenth- to the Eighteenth-Century

Roger Freitas: Serious Wit: The Seventeenth-Century Italian Cantata

Alexander Silbiger: Frescobaldi's Two Books of Toccatas: Monuments of Art or
Student Exercises?

12:15 P.M. Lunch concert: Paul O'Dette, lute

2:00 P.M. *Organ and Harpsichord*

Eastman's new Italian Organ (Edoardo Bellotti, Hans Davidsson, and Gerald Woehl)

The Mondini Harpsichord at Memorial Art Gallery (Monika May, Rob Kerner, and
William Porter)

Willard Martin: Introduction to the *Cembalo Cromatico*

Christopher Stenbridge: Lecture-recital *Consonanze Stravaganti:*

Music for the *Cembalo Cromatico*

8:00 P.M. Evening concert: Hans Davidsson, David Higgs, and William Porter

Saturday, October 15

9:00 A.M. *Organ and Clavichord*

Annette Richards and David Yearsley: Cornell University's Vicedomini Organ

David Yearsley: An English Catholic in Rome: Peter Philips's Organ Music

Annette Richards: Elevation Toccata and Painting in Frescobaldi's Rome

Joel Speerstra: The Italian Clavichord Tradition: Form and Function

Pamela Ruiten-Feenstra: *Con gravità e leggiadria:* Aspects of Technique and Invention
in the Toccatas of Gabrieli, Merulo, and Diruta

1:00 P.M. Lunch concert Eastman students

2:00 P.M. *The Italian Organ in the Liturgy*

Edoardo Bellotti: Organ and Liturgy in Italy from the Council of Trent to the
Eighteenth Century

Daniel Zager: Vespers Hymnody as a Context for Organ Composition and
Improvisation in Sixteenth- and Early Seventeenth-Century Italy
Workshop on Psalm Tones and Church Tones (Kerala Snyder and Stephen Kennedy,
with Eastman students)

5:30 P.M. Vespers for St. Andrew – Organ Music by Bernardo Pasquini and
Chant: Edoardo Bellotti and Christ Church Schola Cantorum
(Stephen Kennedy, director)

Evening: Festive Italian dinner with performance of vocal music by Il Virtuoso Ritivo,
from Trentino, Italy

Sunday, October 16

1:00 P.M. Lunch Concert: Annette Richards and David Yearsley

**2:45 P.M. The Italian Organ in America: Multiple Perspectives on
Organ Building and Restoration**

Hans Davidsson, moderator; Edoardo Bellotti, Steven Dieck, Bruce Fowkes, Paul
Fritts, Martin Pasi, William Porter, Roger Sherman, George Taylor, Gerald Woehl,
Munetaka Yokota, among others

5:00 P.M. Vocal music from Trento in Italy: Il Virtuoso Ritivo

6:00 P.M. Concluding Panel Discussion

9:00 P.M. Compline Christ Church Schola Cantorum, Stephen Kennedy, director

*One of the crates contain-
ing parts of the Italian
baroque organ is lifted
by forklift through the
main entrance of the
Memorial Art Gallery in
Rochester.*



Building Blocks for Improvisation

by Michael Unger

Studying improvisation is like learning a language: studying the musical equivalents of vocabulary, grammar, and syntax are necessary to learning how to communicate meaningfully. The goal of the nine students enrolled in this spring's advanced organ improvisation class was to learn one aspect of the compositional language of Olivier Messiaen. His characteristic "modes of limited transposition" were studied as if learning new vocabulary, grammar, and syntax; these modes were then used as building blocks for improvisation. Throughout the semester, students experimented with these new tools of communication by creating a variety of meditative and virtuosic works. Students often had the opportunity to demonstrate their creations for the entire Organ Department during our Monday night departmental colloquia.

This concentrated work culminated in the concluding improvisation recital held in early May. Students were given a theme in Messiaen's "Mode 4" five days before the concert and were told to create an improvisation combined with a theme of their own invention in Messiaen's "Mode 2," otherwise known as the octatonic mode. Students were

allowed only two hours to practice at an organ prior to the recital, though they could spend as much preparation time as they wanted away from a keyboard. The concert demonstrated a wide variety of ways to expand the short theme.

In previous semesters students in the advanced organ improvisation class learned other musical languages central to the understanding of the history of the organ art. While an Italian organ was on loan to Eastman from Cornell University, students learned contrapuntal improvisation patterns based on psalm-tone formulas. Another semester explored the evolution of sonata form from the eighteenth through the twenty-first centuries.

Students first entering the study of improvisation at Eastman explore a variety of harmonic tools, including the use of seventh chords, ninth chords, and the octatonic mode; formal patterns, including meditation, scherzo, and hymn preludes, are also studied. From the weekly assignments, the students chose one or two to perform in the concluding improvisation concert. In all, it was a year rich in opportunities for the study of organ improvisation.

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The 04/05 Improvisation class following the end-of-year recital, May, 2005

Sacred Music Diploma Program Update

by Peter DuBois

As we complete the fourth year of the Sacred Music Diploma program a brief update is in order. At the 2005 spring commencement exercises, two more candidates, Daniel Aune and Jon Johnson, received their diplomas. Several other candidates have successfully completed all of the requirements for the diploma and are awaiting the completion of their current degree programs to receive their diplomas. A strong class of six new diploma candidates entered the program in fall 2004. Several of them will be in the internship phase of the program this coming year and will complete the program in spring 2006. We currently have eight students active at various stages in the Sacred Music Diploma program, in addition to those who have completed the requirements but have yet to complete their degrees.

Recent graduates of the SMD have moved into positions on the path to becoming strong leaders in the profession in years to come. Christian Lane will be entering his second year

as Assistant Organist at St. Thomas Church, New York, working with John Scott and Jeremy Bruns, and Lee Wright has completed his first year as Director of Music and Organist at Rochester's Downtown United Presbyterian Church, continuing the strong tradition there with innovative leadership in a diverse setting.

We continue to evaluate and strengthen the curriculum leading to the Diploma, under the guidance of the Sacred Music Advisory Committee, which includes faculty members Hans Davidsson, Donna Brink Fox, David Higgs, Vincent Lenti, William Weinert, and Daniel Zager.

If those of you in teaching positions are sending students for further study at Eastman, I encourage you to suggest that they explore the Sacred Music Diploma program. I am always available to answer questions, receive suggestions, and provide support. I may be reached at 585-271-6537 ext 109 or by email:

pdubois@thirdpresbyterian.org

A Trip to Vilnius and Göteborg

by John Fenstermaker

In mid-May two international conferences on historic organs converged in Vilnius, Lithuania. The reason: an organ built in Bach's environs in 1776 has survived centuries of war and foreign occupation, and is still in its original home in the Dominican church in Vilnius. The Russians occupied Lithuania from the 1940s until 1991, a time when organ building was forbidden. Now the organ may be seen and restored. The builder was a German with the Italianized last

name of Casparini. The instrument, arguably the best preserved late baroque organ in Europe, is being restored by the Göteborg Organ Art Center (GOArt) in collaboration with the Lithuanian Cultural Ministry, the Eastman School of Music, and five of the most renowned American organ builders: Steve Dieck, Bruce Fowkes, Paul Fritts, Martin Pasi, and George Taylor. And, amazingly, a *copy* of the Casparini organ will be built by GOArt in Sweden, to be installed at

Christ Church in Rochester. Its use will be shared by the church and the Eastman School. This kind of sonic time travel is invaluable in unearthing the long-lost secrets of ancient organ building, and will, perhaps just as importantly, reveal new insights into music of the late-baroque masters.

Those of us who traveled from the States—including organists, professors, the five organ builders, aficionados, a master timber-framer (to study the physics and dimensions of the organ gallery), and a sculptor (to examine first-hand the statues and intricate wood carvings of the case)—were there to examine the 1776 Casparini organ and hear recitals on a dozen other notable instruments. The all-star cast of recitalists (on both the organ and the clavichord) was comprised of Hans Davidsson, Ulrika Davidsson, David Higgs, William Porter, and Harald Vogel.

A far more technical and scientific conference for organ builders, “Towards the Regeneration of Historical Pipe Organs,” occurred simultaneously, held under the auspices of the city of Vilnius. Lecturers came from the Max Planck Institute for Metal Research in Stuttgart, Germany; the Polytechnic University in Ancona, Italy; and Göteborg University in Sweden. The lectures—some in German, some in English, some in both—included such topics as “Experiences of Historic Organ Reconstruction,” “Nicking in Historic Organs,” “Methods of Digital Analysis of Pipe Organ Sound,” and “Neutron and X-Ray Diffraction Experiments on Historical Copper Alloys for Organ Reeds.” A good portion of the subject matter was beyond this writer’s grasp; even so, it was fascinating to listen in. Did you know, for instance, that the *Bernoulli effect*, which permits a plane to fly, is the same phenomenon that permits an organ reed to sound? One erudite scientist, Franco Rustichelli from Italy, described the distance between neutrons in a certain alloy as being .36 of a nanometer apart. Did you know

that a nanometer is one-billionth of a meter? He then provided the metaphor of a three-foot long Italian sausage, cut into a billion slices, each a nanometer thick, which would feed one billion little people. “And,” he continued, “in Italy, if you ask for some slices of Mortadella on your sandwich, they will actually be only one nanometer thick!”

Preceding the Lithuanian week, we stopped at historic Göteborg in Sweden, and saw the marvelous organ at the Örgryte New Church. This organ is a four-manual, 54-stop instrument in the style of the North German builders of the late-seventeenth century, with special attention to the work of Arp Schnitger, the most famous organ builder of that era. GOArt’s organ shop built the organ. It is almost unbelievable that Hans Davidsson was able to pull together people from so many countries, so many fields of expertise, and so many world-class authorities of diverse and strong opinions—and that he ultimately succeeded in this most unlikely enterprise. The project took eleven years of scientific and musical research; the result is an ideal incarnation of the organ builder’s art. The Örgryte organ is worlds away from the modern pipe organ in essential aspects: visual, tactile, sonic, and aesthetic.

Like most Americans, 95 percent of my experience has been on electro-pneumatic instruments with equal temperament. The experience of seeing, touching, and hearing the Örgyte organ opened my eyes—and ears and mind—to new concepts, both aural and philosophical. For one thing, the quarter comma mean-



The project took eleven years of scientific and musical research; the result is an ideal incarnation of the organ builder’s art.

The North German baroque organ in the Örgryte church

This was another seriously authentic historic recreation, and completely convincing musically.

tone temperament, with its pure major thirds, really startled me. The generous scaling of the principals and chorus reeds was also startling—in a pleasing way. Another acoustical surprise: standing high inside the organ at the Brust Positiv, I listened to different stops, some of the pipes only inches away. At that distance, the 8' Trechter Regal sounded like an angry mallard on steroids. But heard from down in the nave, far below, it morphed into a lovely English horn quality, both musical and colorful. Another counterintuitive discovery: an organ's winding system should have a certain amount of leakage—if it doesn't, the sound may have a hard, unyielding quality. After all, the sounds of an orchestra are constantly shifting—why should the organ be inhumanly inflexible?

Visiting Göteborg University's School of Music, we were treated to an improvised demonstration by William Porter of the various registers of the Cavaillé-Coll-style instrument built by the Netherlands builder Verschueren, in 1998. This was another seriously authentic historic recreation, and completely convincing musically. I would wager that in a blind test no one

could tell this was not a Cavaillé-Coll. We also heard an 1871 Willis organ in first-rate condition, with wonderful diapasons.

The first night in Sweden (after a twenty-hour transit via Chicago), we stayed at the Villa Fridolin, a charming bed-and-breakfast hotel right in the city, run by Gunilla Fridolin, who provided authentic Swedish breakfasts for us. Later, Ulrika Davidsson played an enjoyable recital on the clavichord: Haydn, Curlionis, and Hessenberg. It was good to hear music not only of the eighteenth-century and before, but also music for clavichord from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

An enlightening lecture in Vilnius by Harald Vogel about the construction, repertory, and technique of the clavichord, which came into its own in the 1300s, was a highlight. Someone asked if clavichord music could be played in a satisfying manner on the modern piano. Vogel thought for a moment, and said, "The piano can imitate this musical style, but the piano cannot lead you to it." Perhaps the same may be said of the electro-pneumatic organ playing baroque music.

For several generations, the organ world has been dominated by what may be called a Dupré-Lemare ethos—and there is great value and joy in this kind of music. But there are other ways to approach music. When the remarkable German pianist Grete Sultan played Bach's *Goldberg Variations* at her farewell concert, *Los Angeles Times* critic Mark Swed wrote, "She clearly strives for something higher from music than emotion or adventure. Her Bach has the modernist's attention paid to the smallest detail of sound and structure. The feeling here is that the spirit will soar much higher if it isn't pushed."

John Fenstermaker is director of music at Trinity-by-the-Cove in Naples, Florida.

The Cavaillé-Coll-style organ built by Verschueren for the University of Göteborg's School of Music



A Visit to GOArt

by Jonathan Ortloff

Organ building is a peculiar yet perfect marriage of science and art. During the Organ Department's January 2005 trip to Göteborg, organ students got to witness how healthy this marriage is. At the Göteborg Organ Art center (GOArt) we spent a whole morning observing how talented artists, scientists, scholars, and craftsmen produce remarkable pipe organs that transcend modernity, and let us hear the sounds that inspired Buxtehude, Bach, and their contemporaries.

This part of the Sweden trip was especially meaningful for me, since my education in Rochester mirrors this same marriage of art and science as I prepare for a career in organ building. In addition to my organ performance degree, I am also pursuing an engineering degree at the River Campus. Seeing and experiencing GOArt, a true bastion of the art of organ building, was one of the highpoints of the trip for me.

On a rainy Saturday morning our throng of young organists walked off the tram and through the streets of Göteborg to a very unassuming brick building. There was no sign of the curious industry that occurred within the structure, but, as we were rapidly to discover, the lack of a sign outside did not detract from what went on inside. After a warm welcome from the



staff, including delicious pastries and beverages from their magic Swedish coffee/tea/hot chocolate machine, we broke into smaller groups to tour the shop.

Several familiar faces greeted us at the shop, one of them being Joel Speerstra's. Joel had just spent the fall semester in Rochester teaching organ, and showing us the wonders the clavichord can do for organ technique. Joel spends time in GOArt's clavichord workshop and in the organ workshop, where he serves as coordinator of research for the Christ Church project in Rochester. Leading us into an unused bomb shelter in the basement of the building, Joel showed us several clavichords in various stages of construction and demonstrated an authentic antique clavichord that he uses for research. The most interesting and astonishing part of Joel's tour was his demonstration of "tuning" the instrument. While that process suggests the tuning and tempering of the strings, Joel showed us there was much more painstaking work to producing a musically successful clavichord. By removing varying thicknesses of wood from the case, soundboard, and even the keys of the clavichord, Joel "tunes" the instrument to itself, producing much more desirable and complete harmonic development throughout the instrument, amplifying and intensifying the sound dramatically. Joel's meticulous research into historic construction of clavichords certainly was apparent to all who witnessed him in his element at GOArt.

Emerging from the subterranean and nuclear-secure clavichord lair, our group followed Joel upstairs where he showed us carved case decorations in progress for GOArt's current instrument for the National University in Seoul, South Korea. Being reconstructed from a photograph of an

*Author Jonathan Ortloff
with Annie Kirk inside
the 1909 Lunden (Swedish
Romantic) organ at
Vasa Church*

It soon became apparent that huge amounts of time are spent in the construction of one pipe.

authentic organ case, the pipe shades were first hand drawn on paper. The paper is then laid over the glued-up wood that will become the pipe shades.

The second familiar face we saw was that of Munetaka Yokota. We've seen Munetaka several times in Rochester at the EROI festivals. As friendly and cheerful as ever, Munetaka led us through the organ building shop, showing us the various stages of construction involved in a seventeenth-century North German organ. While many of the visitors were experiencing their first visit to an organ shop, this felt like home to me. From the stacks of rough-cut lumber drying for the construction of the much-anticipated Casparini-style organ for Christ Church in Rochester, we moved into the wood shop, blessedly spacious and uncrowded. I was especially impressed that many of the workers had made their own tools specially designed to help them in their very particular line of work.

In the pipe shop, Munetaka showed us how raw metal goes through dozens of steps to become organ pipes. For the organ students, this was perhaps the most interesting part of the tour. We may not always think of all the work that goes into each pipe when

we are playing, yet here we saw the long process that brings a pipe into being. From the rediscovered process of sand-casting, to the careful hand planing of the metal, to the actual construction of the different parts of the pipes, it soon became apparent that huge amounts of time are spent in the construction of one pipe.

For me, the most interesting part of the tour was the reed pipe shop. The construction of reed pipes is even more complex than that of flue pipes, and again we witnessed seventeenth-century reproductions being crafted with twenty-first-century methods, as well as methods discovered through the meticulous research of GOArt over the past decade. Additionally, it was quite intriguing to see that many of the construction methods used for making these historically accurate pipes are strikingly similar, if not identical, to those used today.

The last leg of the tour was hosted by Ibo Ortgies. In addition to the mammoth amount of research into historical organ construction, GOArt also seeks to capture the unique sound of these instruments through accurate and historically-based tuning and temperament systems. Ibo, just back from defending his doctoral

Organ builder Munetaka Yokota at the keydesk of the North German style organ in Örgryte church





dissertation on this very subject, soon demonstrated to us that he was a true master of this very specific field of the organ builder's craft. In his short, thirty-minute presentation to us, he very logically and simply described the need for having temperaments, as well as how various temperaments "work," and how one arrives at tuning an instrument in a certain temperament. It was quite obvious Ibo could have spoken for much longer on this subject, but he gave us a very thorough overview of several different temperaments and why some sound "better" or "worse" than others. His presentation culminated in one of the students tuning a "perfect third" on a harpsichord, the first step on the road to the mean-tone temperament he was discussing.

After a whirlwind tour of the whole shop, the organ students were again treated to generous Swedish hospitality with yet *more* sweets, and more coffee out of that amazing and mystical machine. After having already heard the famous North German reproduction in Örgryte, we now understood much better and could appreciate the unfathomable amount of work that went into producing this organ, and the current organ GOArt is building for Korea.

While GOArt has outstanding facilities, an important facility that

it lacks is an erecting room. Once all the parts of the organ are made, they must be assembled at the shop to ensure that all the parts fit together properly, and that everything works. As such, the GOArt team has the use of a rather interesting, yet perfectly adequate, room at Chalmers University of Technology in Göteborg for use as an erecting room. As Joel drove us to this mysterious building, the only clue he gave to what lay inside was "think Frankenstein." As it turned out, this colossal room, over forty feet high and round was a lab used for high-voltage electric study, and did indeed bring visions of Mary Shelley's famous doctor and his lab. Huge copper spheres of the largest Van de Graaff generators I've ever seen stood like an odd forest throughout the space. The floor was also of copper, allowing the researchers to arc from the generators to the floor. And yet, amidst all this twentieth-century technology stood a decidedly early eighteenth-century organ, half assembled.

The organ, a two-manual and pedal affair, is certainly not as large as the Örgryte organ, but reflects the same spirit, as a sort of younger brother to the big organ. The case has been constructed, as well as the console, and some of the biggest pipes were in, but unfortunately, no more. However, the 8' Principal of the Great was on a voicing jack in the room, so we could get a glimpse of what the organ would sound like, especially given the cavernous space in which it was assembled. Here we got to see Munetaka's real talent—as a voicer. The sound of the pipes soared throughout the room as students and professors played them—their tone indescribable in words. Ask Dr. Porter what he thought of the rank the next time you see him; he couldn't say enough about it when we were there.

After yet more food, we finally departed this interesting juxtaposition of ancient organ and modern science, on a day that had shown us how successful the marriage of art and science, of any age, continues to be.

Ibo Ortgies demonstrates tuning and temperament systems on a specially constructed harpsichord.

As Joel drove us to this mysterious building, the only clue he gave to what lay inside was "think Frankenstein."

Day-by day in Sweden

Most days consisted of private and semi-private lessons on the many instruments throughout the city. Also, the improvisation and organ literature classes met at one of the organs every day for a class. In addition to these staples of our trip, there were several other group sessions and recitals that are outlined below:

Monday 1/3

Departure to Sweden: Rochester-Chicago-Copenhagen-Göteborg

Tuesday 1/4

Arrival in Göteborg. Introduction to the organs at Örgryte (North German and English Romantic)

Wednesday 1/5

Introduction to the organ at Artisten (French Symphonic)
Group Seminar at Vasa (German Romantic)

Thursday 1/6

Group Seminar Christinae Church (1864 Marcussen)

Friday 1/7

Group Seminar at Haga Church (Brombaugh and Marcussen)

Saturday 1/8

Visit to GOArt

Sunday 1/9

Student recital: Vasa (German Romantic)

Monday 1/10

Group Seminar at Backa Church: (Swedish: classical/early romantic)

Tuesday 1/11

Group Seminar: Artisten (French Symphonic)

Wednesday 1/12

Student Recital: Haga Church (Brombaugh and Marcussen)

Thursday 1/13

Group Seminar: Örgryte (North German and English)

Friday 1/14

Group Seminar: Artisten (French Symphonic)
Student recital for tsunami relief (Örgryte)

Saturday 1/15

Return to Rochester: Göteborg-Copenhagen-Chicago-Rochester

An American in Göteborg

by Adam Peithman

“Hej!” exclaimed a few Swedish children in the front lobby of Backa Parish House. I said “hello” in return, but this only caused confusion. Obviously, I wasn’t “from around here.” I was, for the very first time, a foreigner. Our trip to Sweden was a remarkable experience. The friendly people, the warm hospitality, and, of course, the magnificent organs made this trip truly memorable. I remember getting off the plane at Göteborg and being immediately transported to a church called Örgryte. It was nighttime, rainy, and I was exhausted from the tremendously long but luxurious SAS flight. There I was, standing on the other side of the world in front of one of the spookiest churches I have ever seen. I would soon realize that the greatest mystery was not the outside of the church, but rather what was housed inside. The North German and English romantic organs were amazing. After listening to the North German instrument, I remember saying to myself, “So this is what five to ten million dollars sounds like.” After many hours of practice time, lectures, and a student recital, I believe that I have come to understand the glory of the North German organ and its English complement.

Of course, Örgryte was not the

only church with great organs. Who could forget the Christinae Church’s Marcussen organ and Dr. Porter’s improvisation on the hymn, “How Brightly Shines the Morning Star.” Then there was the Cavallé-Coll style organ at the Artisten School of Music. Besides playing this remarkable organ, I enjoyed listening to my colleagues perform on it. I remember thinking that the music had a new life, even a rebirth. I can also recall the floor shaking when the lower reeds were added. This had the affect of surrounding the listener both mentally and physically with music.

Overall, I have much to be thankful for. I am most notably thankful for Professors Hans Davidsson and William Porter, for their dedication to their students and for their cause to advance the status of the organ. I am also thankful for the people of Göteborg, who gave me directions, transportation, food, and shelter at almost no cost. And lastly, I would like to thank everyone in the Organ Department for their hard work. Whether it was playing in an EROI recital at home or a student recital in Göteborg, I believe we presented ourselves very well. I have come to have a greater appreciation for everyone in our department.

***There I was,
standing on
the other side
of the world in
front of one of
the spookiest
churches I have
ever seen.***



*Adam Peithman in front
of one of Göteborg's
trams*

Student Recitals

by Tim Pyper

Tim Pyper and Fredrik
Tobin at the Willis
console following the
tsunami relief concert

**Had our
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It is often said that necessity is the mother of invention. Put another way: Playing an organ recital necessitates learning how to play the instrument! This was one of many lessons learned this past January in Sweden.

The organs of Göteborg represent, collectively, the utmost in tonal diversity. This fact is fairly obvious to anyone listening to these marvelous instruments. However, it falls upon the organist not only to familiarize himself with a new tonal landscape, but also to adapt—sometimes significantly—his technique to the instrument at hand. On the most fundamental level, there is almost no uniformity between instruments in terms of console layout, touch, pedalboards, and the like. Add to this split sharps, short octaves, and extremely reverberant acoustics (by North American standards!), and the playing experience can be a challenge, to say the least!

Had our only contact with these instruments been in lessons, these new technical and musical hurdles might have seemed little more than novelties—informative, perhaps interesting, but ultimately unconnected with our experience of organ playing. Fortunately, this was not the case. Each of us was required to play in at least one of several public recitals, raising the stakes considerably but ultimately making our learning experience much richer. I don't think I am exaggerating when I say that very few organ departments could have risen to these challenges with such skill and flair. Highlights of the student concerts included:

- Jonathan Ryan performing Reubke's *Sonata on the 94th Psalm* on the 1909 Lundén (Swedish Romantic) organ at Vasa Church
- Daniel Aune playing a Froberger elevation toccata on the 1992 Brombaugh organ at Haga Church and,



later in the same recital, Rudy de Vos performing Mendelssohn's *Sonata No. 6* on the newly restored 1861 Marcussen organ

- Kola Owolabi playing *Naiades* from Vierne's *Pièces de Fantasie* on the Cavallé-Coll-style organ, built by Verschueren in 1998. The concert concluded with a performance of Dupré's rarely heard *Prelude and Fugue in C Major*, by Christopher Jacobson.

The final concert held at Örgryte Church is worthy of special note, since it was offered as a tsunami relief benefit recital. Sweden lost 1,500 of its citizens in the December 26 tsunami, and so, only weeks after the disaster, this concert was extremely poignant for both the performers and the audience. Örgryte Church contains two truly remarkable instruments: A four-manual Schnitger-style organ completed by GOArt in 2000, and a beautifully restored 1871 Father Willis organ. The concert opened with a performance of Sweelinck's *Psalm 23*, played by Annie Kirk, and closed with Erica Johnson performing Buxtehude's *Praeludium in G Minor*. In the middle of the recital, we were treated to a stunning improvisation by Fredrik Tobin on the Willis organ. It was, by all accounts, an extremely successful concert and a wonderful conclusion to our two weeks in Göteborg.

EROI Recitals

In 2002 a series of organ recitals was initiated to raise awareness for the Eastman Rochester Organ Initiative and to raise money for the student trip to Sweden. Eastman organ students continued this tradition by presenting organ recitals in Rochester and throughout the surrounding communities. These efforts highlighted the exciting possibilities of EROI along with Eastman's reputation as a school of excellence in the training of organists. Below is a sampling of photos from this year's EROI Community Concert Series:



(Left to Right) Laura Carrasco, Corey Powell, Patrick Henning, and Annie Kirk after the EROI recital at the Church of St. Luke and St. Simon of Cyrene

Eric Dombrowski performing in the EROI concert at St. Paul's Episcopal Church



(Left to Right) Andrew Pester, Christopher Jacobson, Jonathan Ortloff, Lars Gjerde, and Lucinda Meredith after the EROI recital at Bethany Presbyterian Church

(Left to Right) Daniel Aune, Matthew Brown, and Jon Johnson following the EROI recital in the Third Presbyterian Church chapel



Save the dates for EROI Festival 2005

October 9

Inaugural Concerts

October 10 – 12

Masterclasses: Frescobaldi, Pasquini, and improvisation

October 13 – 16

Italian Baroque Symposium

co-sponsored by the Westfield Center



Professors Hans Davidsson, David Higgs, and William Porter

RESONANCE

A NEWSLETTER OF THE ORGAN DEPARTMENT
OF THE EASTMAN SCHOOL OF MUSIC

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