



MARCH 2021, VOL. 5

WINDWORKS

The newsletter of the
Arrowhead chapter of the AGO
Where the pipe organ is celebrated



A NOTE FROM BRIAN

Brian Kapp, Dean

These past weeks, I have been thinking about what happens next. Where do we see ourselves, our chapter, in the coming years? What could we be for our community? Sometimes the organ and those who play it seem unapproachable. I know I felt that way as a young pianist who was curious about the organ and wanted to learn more. I found myself intimidated by the whole idea. Then, I found myself directing a music program and had no idea how to navigate manuals, pedals, stops, or registrations, let alone playing anything on it. So, I used the piano exclusively for a while until I could fake it well enough to use the organ in services. I spent a few years teaching myself, exploring the sounds of the organ, and building up my confidence. It wasn't until half-way through college that I met the organ professor at my university. He was so kind and non-judgmental about what I knew and didn't know, and I finally felt safe to learn.

Arrowhead AGO can be that affirming, welcoming organization for those in our ranks and for those who don't feel safe to learn quite yet. We should be. That takes all of us - each one of us can be a welcoming presence to those around us. That's the best way to advance our mission of bringing the organ to all people. Every opportunity is an opportunity to recruit new members and friends. I am thrilled to be a part of that with all of you.

Brian

GOOD NEWS THIS ISSUE:

- *A Note From Brian*
- *Events*
- *Rank & File Organ Essentials from David Rollin*
- *Sam Black's historical spotlight on the Schantz/Hoppe organ at St. Michael's Catholic Church*
- *From the Editor*

IN PRAISE OF BACH

Tune in for the virtual presentation of Bach's music on Sunday, March 28 at 3:00 pm!

Performers include: Velda Graham-Bell, Karen Sande, David Tryggestad, Melanie Sever, Betsy Husby, Michael Fuchs, Courtney Ellian, Tasha Kapp, & Brian Kapp.

Check out our facebook page for the video and more information.

COFFEE & CONVERSATION

We hope you had a chance to join us via Zoom on Saturday, February 20 at 10:00 am for a virtual check-in.

Karen Sande led a conversation on how things are going during the pandemic and the participants all had an opportunity to share as a community.

Check our email blast for information on the next Coffee & Conversation.

RANK AND FILE: ORGAN ESSENTIALS

Dave Rollin

Tuning, continued:

Centuries past, in employment agreements between churches and organists, it was sometimes specified that the organist was responsible for tuning the reeds. Today's organist should consult the organ maintenance person they retain, to see if they would recommend the organist attempt it for their instrument. On the plus side, if there is a sour or dead note, the organist could take care of the problem quickly and not have to wait until the next scheduled service call. On the other hand, some basic instruction is required so the pipe can be identified and tuned without the risk of damage. Also, some organs are difficult to get into, may require navigating steep ladders, narrow passages and tight spaces, and present more possibility of damage. ("do not try this at home; only performed by professional stunt tuners under controlled conditions").

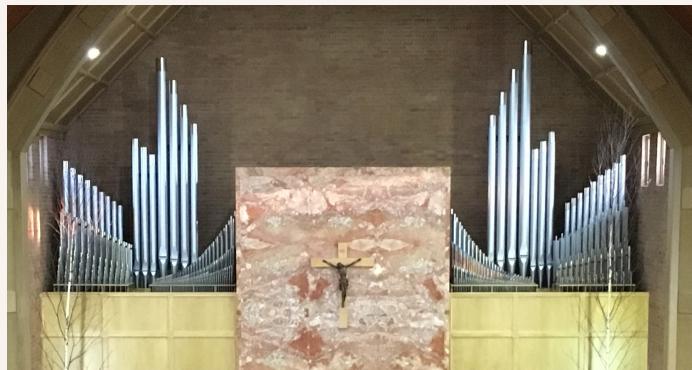
For those that might be interested, here is my approach to tuning. First, we need to understand the concept of "beats". For example, if one pipe is playing a 440 cycles, and a second pipe is playing at 442 cycles at the same time, our ear will also hear the combination of the two vibrations as a pulsing at two cycles per second. We have all heard this effect when string and celeste stops are played together. In that case the pulsing is intentional. When tuning, I listen for the pulsing (the beats) and adjust the tuning device of the out of tune pipe until the beats get slower and stop. This also works with pipes playing an octave apart, or an octave and a fifth, for example, since our ears will hear the beats between the harmonics in the tone. Second, we need a reliable reference stop that we know is in tune. Usually the 4' octave on the Great is a good choice. It tends to stay in good tune within itself, and has a solid tone with a good array of harmonics to help with tuning stops an octave apart, or mutations. I will check the 4' octave by playing four notes at a time starting with C, c, c', c". If there are no beats, I know all four are in tune. I then proceed to move up the keyboard in half steps, listening for beats each time. If I hear a beat, it's easy to lift one finger at a time to find the offending pipe. I'll make a note of those pipes to tune and deal with them first when I'm in the organ, by tuning the offending pipe to the octave below or above. Once the reference stop is in tune, I leave it alone and use it to check the tuning of the other stops, one note at a time. It is best to tune ranks an octave apart from the reference. Two pipes playing the same pitch tend to influence each other (called "drawing") and make it hard to know if you really got it in tune. So, if there is a 4' flute, I might thus tune it to the 8' principal once I know the principal is in tune. I don't normally need to go through tuning all the stops. Most pipes stay in good tune, and I will focus on those that I find tend to need it. These are usually the reeds, smaller wood pipes, and stopped pipes with movable stoppers or caps. (see my comments from the previous article). For open flue pipes I can tell whether it needs to go sharp or flat by hovering the tuning tool over the top of the pipe. I don't touch the pipe since heat from my hand makes it go sharp. As the tool comes close to the pipe, its "shades" the pipe and causes it to go flat. If the beats slow down then I know the pipe needs to be flattened. If the beats get faster, it should be tuned sharper. For stopped pipes, shading the mouth will work, assuming it can be reached.

There are many subtleties of tuning, but I hope this has been a reasonable introduction. Identifying the different ranks of pipes, and their arrangement in the organ, is a topic for another article.

About the author: David Rollin has worked with Jaeckel, Inc. organ builders since 1984, designing, building, maintaining and tuning pipe organs.

A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The SCHANTZ/HOPPE ORGAN at St. Michael's Catholic Church, Duluth, MN



THE SCHANTZ/HOPPE ORGAN AT ST. MICHAEL'S

Sam Black

In this series of Organ-ic histories of several of the pipe organs in our Duluth-Superior/Twin Ports community, this is the first near fairy tale story, but it won't be the last. In the second decade of the 20th century, Roman Catholics living in the towns of Lakeside and Lakewood had two places of worship, St. Joseph and St. Michael. As St. Michael's parish grew and expanded, a collection of buildings was built and rebuilt, until the present church structure dedication in November, 1956. An interesting note aside was that one year later, in November, 1957, the Duluth Cathedral was officially removed from Sacred Heart and assigned to Holy Rosary. Coincidentally, around 1978 the St. Joseph parish merged with St. Michael's and helped in the considerable growth during the rest of the 20th century.

The master plan was to raze Sacred Heart, after moving the Felgemaker pipe organ out to St. Michael's new sanctuary. The details of that got really complicated, so that ultimately, in the mid-1990s, Sacred Heart became a historical site, along with the Felgemaker. In the meantime, St. Michael's acquired an electronic Rodger's Hybrid, with 2 ranks of pipes to add a visual perspective. This was a sad instrument when I first encountered it in the late 1990s, and it's nice, finally, to have it removed.

When Brian Kapp arrived musically at St. Michael's in 2014, he renewed discussion about pipe organ possibilities. He happened upon a notice from Bowling Green University (Ohio) seeking a new owner for the 1957 Schantz/Holtkamp recital organ, before campus reconstruction began. Brian visited the organ, liked what he found, and negotiated the deal, so to speak. Robert Hoppe and his organ studio were hired to tackle the removal, modification, and installation, which was completed by the end of 2017.

Walter Holtkamp, Sr. designed this organ for Bowling Green. The blueprints were sent out for construction bidding, and the Schantz Organ Co. (Ohio) submitted the winning bid. This pipe organ was first installed in 1957, then moved to a new campus location during the 1970s. Now it happens to be in St. Michael's sanctuary in Duluth, MN. There are about 26 ranks, with 22 stops. Major revoicing took place with the installation at St. Michael's, and the Syndyne 8400 system: a direct electric rebuild for the console, replaced the previous electro-pneumatic action.

To my ear, the organ sounds quite Germanic, with very clear and expressive open ranks that sound good as solo and as ensemble choices. The main principal is not as strong as I would prefer, but the Flute à Cheminée and the Cromorne are amazingly rich to hear. Overall, the finalized ensemble sound has a lovely German clarity quite welcome here in (Scandinavian) Duluth. The visual installation is lovely and well-balanced at the front of the sanctuary, and the console can be moved around on its trolley as necessary. I look forward to playing it, and we can all look forward to Brian's sharing of the first chorale prelude in the Johannes Brahms' collection Op. 122.

"This will be our reply to violence: to make music more intensely, more beautifully, more devotedly than ever before."
– Leonard Bernstein



The Back Page

FROM THE EDITOR

Rosemary Guiney

During a recent conversation with a young friend, I was reminded how unfamiliar others are about the pipe organ. Her experience with the pipe organ was limited to only those times she attended a church service. She no longer attends church; therefore, she no longer ever listens to the organ. I would venture to say that is the case with the majority of Americans.

When the pipe organ was popular and the organ business successful in the United States, back in the early part of the 20th century, the pipe organ could be found at concerts, entertainment and, of course, thru education as organs were even built in some public schools. Many Americans were familiar with the different and unique sounds of the pipe organ; it was part of their cultural experience.

How do we remedy this situation and help others experience the pipe organ? As Brian mentions in his article, one person at a time. Each organist or organ lover does his or her part. For my friend, I sent her information on the Arrowhead AGO website and a link to the you tube channel so that she can listen to each of the Organ-ic videos. This is an easy, cost effective, practical way to reach people today.

Pax Tibi,

Rosemary

ARROWHEAD CHAPTER CONTACTS

Dean: Brian Kapp (keyed88up@gmail.com)

Subdean: Rosemary Guiney (rosemary.guiney@duluthcatholic.org)

Secretary: Jeff Urbaniak (jurbaniak@prdluluth.com)

Treasurer: Allen Anway (allen@a2d2.com)

Board Members-at-large: David Larson, Jan Bilden, Linda Turpening

Membership Committee Co-Chairs: David Larson (dmlarson@yahoo.com)
and Velda Bell (veldagb@hotmail.com)

Program Committee Co-Chairs: Karen Sande (jknsande@charter.net) and Brian Kapp

Communications Committee: Sam Gray & Rosemary Guiney

Education/Scholarship Committee Chair: Carol Donahue (mpcmdonahue@aol.com)

Hospitality Committee Chair: Linda Turpening (linda@archdirect.com)

Development Committee Chair: Carol Donahue (mpcmdonahue@aol.com)

Newsletter Editor: Rosemary Guiney (rosemary.guiney@duluthcatholic.com)

HOW TO REACH US:

Tel: (218) 481-8463

info@arrowheadago.com

www.arrowheadago.com

Like us on facebook

