

THE AMERICAN ORGANIST

JULY 2010



THE AMERICAN ORGANIST

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furthering its ideals, objectives, and cultural and educational aspirations.
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Bloomington, Indiana
C.B. FISK INC.

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COVER FEATURE

INDIANA UNIVERSITY

JACOBS SCHOOL OF MUSIC

DEDICATES C.B. FISK, OPUS 135

THE INDIANA UNIVERSITY Jacobs School of Music now has a world-class pipe organ befitting its international status as a leader in music performance and education. The Maidee H. and Jackson A. Seward Organ has been constructed and tonally finished by the artisans of C.B. Fisk Inc. of Gloucester, Massachusetts. The firm's Opus 135, a large three-manual and Pedal instrument, comprises 57 independent voices, 70 stops, 68 ranks, and 3,945 pipes. The culmination of a generation's worth of effort to build a concert organ at the prestigious Jacobs School, Opus 135 is truly a stunning musical instrument in an acoustically sympathetic hall. But for a long time its completion was in serious doubt.

The Long and Winding Road

It's not often that the Beatles and organbuilding find common ground, but for the Jacobs School, Opus 135 of C.B. Fisk represents the glorious conclusion to an unpredictable and torturous odyssey. The university originally contracted for an organ in 1992, to be placed in the School of Music's Auer Hall, which had, at that time, not yet been built. The project was plagued with delays, so much so that the organ was not physically in place until 2001, at which point we discovered that the organ promised was not the organ delivered, as it was laden with design and mechanical flaws that even skillful voicing could not overcome. Following the failings and eventual bankruptcy of the original builder, the school took a deep breath, evaluated the status of the organ, and pondered its future.

Help! It Won't Be Long

Several years passed, during which time a number of suggestions and proposals were discussed with a supportive Jacobs School administration, which was committed to resolving the lack of a functioning organ in Auer Hall.



In 2006, the C.B. Fisk firm was selected to rebuild the organ, retaining what it could from the original instrument but with the express understanding that the result would be a Fisk organ. It did not take long for the firm's president, Steve Dieck, project manager Greg Bover, and tonal director David Pike to spring into action, summoning their band mates into a collaborative fervor.

Come Together

Fisk follows important tenets of its organbuilding philosophy. Before any wood is cut and sanded or pipe metal rolled out, one vital element of the firm is already at work—collaboration. Very early on, the firm brought together the Jacob School's administration, representatives of the organ and choral conducting faculty, and associates Dana Kirkegaard (Kirkegaard Acoustic Design LLC) and Charles Nazarian (case design/aesthetics) to assess the hall and the original placement of the organ. The latter two men in particular brainstormed on site, getting a feel for the room and eventually envisioning alternative locations and surroundings for the organ. The result was a proposal to move the organ against the outside wall, thereby addressing some acoustical concerns regarding bass/Pedal support and opening up a space around the console for teaching, masterclasses, and musical collaboration with instrumentalists and choral forces. It was a delight and an inspiration to see these craftsmen and artists work together—listening, inquiring, and even dreaming for the Jacobs School of Music.

One condition of the rebuild was that the case was to be retained; C.B. Fisk did not have the opportunity to create an entirely new design. Nonetheless, Nazarian put his creative eye to work, envisioning the new organ placement and surrounding area, and proposing other modifications to the organ and the hall to better synchronize their visual elements and function. He also effected a particularly artful "tweaking" of the case design to accommodate a shorter case height, as the organ was raised by several feet. One result of these actions is an improved facade, but this move also helped to acoustically engage the ceiling, as the highest section of the Swell division now pierces the attic.

It is no surprise that the world's finest organs are in friendly rooms that support and balance their varied resources, which is why the school supported Kirkegaard's involvement in the project. Kirkegaard assessed the room's acoustical properties, including a delightful lunch-hour set of tests in May 2008, attended by as many students and staff as we could muster in the "off season," so as to recreate the acoustics of a concert setting with audience. Among the experiments was one in which

Kirkegaard inflated and then popped very large balloons (several feet in diameter), measuring the results electronically (apparently the sounds created by such an explosion cover the entire audible frequency range and then some). These results were analyzed and passed on to Fisk to help in determining scalings and were shared with the Jacobs School, along with recommendations to improve aspects of Auer Hall's acoustics. Among the suggestions adopted were measures to harden a number of surfaces to bolster bass reflection, the installation of diffusers in ceiling coffers to deflect sound back to the audience and musicians on the stage (and to keep lower frequencies from vanishing into the attic space), and the addition of new panels placed higher on the room's side walls to alleviate acoustical distortion that can result from the higher parallel surfaces of the rectangular hall.

Magical Mystery Tour

Eclecticism in organbuilding has existed practically since the beginning of the trade. Successful builders of the past walked the fine line between inheritance and innovation; their creations were products of the organs already constructed and new ones endowed with tonal and technological developments of their day. How many Schnitger organs were not entirely new creations but rather rebuilds and enlargements that cast the craftsman into the seemingly competing roles of restorer and trendsetter? And why would Cavallé-Coll retain old 18th-century mutations and other pipework, with only nominal alterations? Their success was not merely based on their ability to create something entirely new but rather to coax potentially contradictory elements into a unified whole.

America has long been defined as a proverbial melting pot of people from all over the world; it makes perfect sense that this quality is reflected in an eclectic aesthetic in organbuilding. Of course, today we are faced with so many contrasting historical styles that to join them can be a nasty business if not done with understanding on the part of both builder and organist in their stop selection. That is why, in considering a rebuild, we decided to focus the organ's

tonal resources in the direction of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Two of the three divisions were enclosed (the original stoplist had one enclosed division); existing voices were reshaped and enhanced to fit this aesthetic. New stops were added to fulfill this goal as well as to fit overarching principles envisioned by the organ faculty—the instrument must be able to play convincingly a variety of modern and historic repertoire, and it must have sufficient resources to succeed in choral and liturgical accompaniment. In short, the organ must serve the school's primary mission—pedagogy—fulfilling the needs of applied organ instruction and all that it encompasses with respect to repertoire, church music, and technical training.



Original case



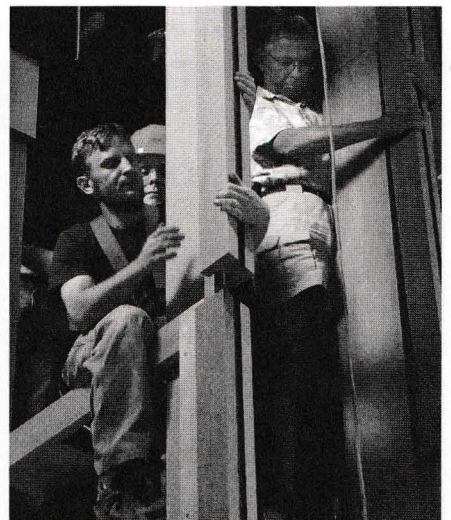
Modified case and new console; setback allows direct access to performance platform from balcony level

The stoplist reflects these disparate missions. Mechanical key action was a given, and we were pleased to be able to maintain a large three-manual design. The instrument boasts principal choruses on each division, each based on a different historical influence. The Great chorus is grounded by a 16' Prestant and a Romantic, round 8' Montre; the Positive, with its shimmering Cymbale mixture, hearkens to the French Classic model, with a clean and clear Principal 8' in the facade and a perfect fit against or with the Great chorus (Grands Pleins Jeux); the Swell mixture is in a Plein jeu style that works with the otherwise Cavallé-Coll-inspired stops of this division but carries the room with remarkable classical clarity. Balanced yet unique, the three choruses work together as well as they function independently—this is the mark of a well-designed and expertly executed eclectic instrument.

The reeds, of which there are a great many (19 stops, 15 independent voices), represent a variety of historical

influences and facilitate honest and distinctive renderings of a broad range of repertoire. French Romanticism is well represented by the five appropriate reeds of the Swell and the 8' and 4' French reeds on the Great as well as the Pedal Bombarde. These same resources can serve a French Classic selection with equal thrill and color, adding to it the Cromorne of the Swell (placed there to balance the Positive cornet compositée). German music is served by the Pedal Posaune as well as the 16' and 8' Trommeten on the Great. The choice of an 8' Cornopean was based on a desire to not duplicate French resources on the Positive but instead offer a darker but distinct yet comparable reed on that division. The 16' Clarinet conjures up the music of Messiaen and Howells (or many a transcription!), and the 8' Tuba on 15 inches of wind pressure, based on Willis, has a clever chest design that allows it to be played mechanically without negatively affecting the action when not in use.

Opus 135 is endowed with a wealth of flue color. Each manual contains a pair of congenial 8' and 4' flutes, with both the Swell and Positive continuing in flutes to the 2' (the latter also has a Larigot 1½'). In a few of the organ's four harmonic flutes, Fisk voicers followed a Cavallé-Coll approach by drilling three different holes in a specific relationship to the pipe



Jason Fouser fitting upper case posts

length. String tone is available on all divisions (the Pedal Violoncelle is a transmission). The Positive boasts a Lade-gast-influenced 8' Viole d'amore and its 4' mate, a Violina, which should perhaps have the term "lieblich" applied to them. There are three celestes, including two on the Positive: a lovely Ludwigtone Flute Celeste and the Unda Maris, which works with the Viole or can serve as a rather successful Piffaro to the Principal 8' in the facade. Such a rich palette can allow for a near Wanamaker experience, especially given the remarkable effectiveness of the two mechanical expression pedals.

And yet, despite the modified Romantic aesthetic, the many classical features are distinguished and colorful. I was astonished to hear how effective the Swell Cornet, composed of several harmonic ranks, filled the room with an assertive, wide-scale, lyric color. The Great Sesquialtera, and especially the two German manual reeds, make a particularly strong case for Baroque music (as does the powerful, snarly, and "woody" French Cromorne). And the Spire Flute has such a remarkable color that it could serve as a one-stop organ all on its own! Wind stabilizer cutouts have been a mainstay of eclectic organ-building for decades; Opus 135 has one installed to instill a natural, vocal flexibility in early music and to give larger combinations that rugged, historic sound that the organist can manipulate through touch.

Here, There, and Everywhere

Opus 135 is large, but all instruments are constrained by limitations of size and circumstance. For example, the inheritance of the facade Principal on the Positive meant that the stop would not be able to fit into the already cramped box and thus not be capable of dynamic expression. And, despite the organ's size, the Pedal boasts only two complete reed stops (16' Bombarde and 16' Posaune). The 32' Contra Posaune is an octave extension, and the three higher reeds (8', 8', and 4') are borrowed from

the manuals. Most of the remaining stops are transmissions or extensions of existing stops. Given the large manual resources that can be pulled down to the Pedal, this compromise has proved to be successful. And, really, there's an awful lot of organ in a relatively small space!

Getting Better All the Time

While Fisk could never be accused of building unit organs, the company has devised and incorporated some very clever mechanisms that allow borrowings to achieve even more tonal variety. For example, the Great 8' Trommet is also available in the Pedal and can even be used in combination *nach* Weckmann: left hand 16' Trommet, right hand Principal 8' (4'), and Pedal 8' Trommet as cantus. Ingeniously apportioned sliders for the Great division's two mixtures allow the same six ranks of pipes to function as either a classically oriented or a 19th-century progressive mixture. Though the organ has a 32' flue, there is also a dual-functioning 10% stop to enhance the bass: drawn with the Soubasse, the Quinte comes from this rank; for a more thunderous effect, it will create a resultant with the open wood instead when the latter is drawn. Experience has taught organ-builders that borrowed stops to the Pedal do not function best when both pallets are used at the same time (one for the manual, one for Pedal), as this creates problems in voicing and tuning. Since the organ has electric stop action, the electronics of the organ can prevent this by allowing only one version of the stop to be pulled at a time.

The Kowalyshyn servopneumatic lever (KSPL), fashioned by longtime Fisk employee Stephen Kowalyshyn, is employed for coupling the Positive and Swell to the Great in large-scale works from the 19th century to the present. Since pedagogy is primary to the mission of this organ, mechanical action was chosen, as the bulk of the historic repertoire was conceived for a tracker. Fisk supplied a mechanical Positive to



Jonas Berg (reed voicer) in the Swell

Great coupler, so that the player can experience unassisted weight and pluck, particularly when playing earlier music where contact with the pallet is preferred (the French Romantic Swell can only couple to the Great using the KSPL, just as Cavallé-Coll organs used the Barker machine).

The electronics, from Solid State Organ Systems, are state of the art, with 384 levels of memory and an additional interface that allows students to store up to 32 levels of memory onto a flash drive. This will be especially useful after the organ department takes delivery of a console clone this summer, allowing students to set and practice their piston-pushing and other "choreography" in a teaching studio to which the Organ Department has unlimited access and then take the stored combinations to the Auer Hall organ, thereby maximizing the time on Opus 135.

Though relatively low-tech, a blower switch was added to play the handful of modern works by composers such as Pärt, Ligeti, and Albright that call for switching off the wind supply while notes are still playing. Since electric stop action can effectively shut off the stops when the organ is turned off, a blower-only switch makes these effects possible.

Yesterday

Thankfully, the Jacobs School has no reason to sing this song anymore; it seems that, for the organ department, all our troubles have gone away. Though we would have preferred to avoid the twisted path we were forced to follow, that road, in the end, did offer one splendid benefit—the artisans of the C.B. Fisk firm have outdone themselves in realizing an eclectic instrument par excellence.

CHRISTOPHER YOUNG
Professor of Music (organ)

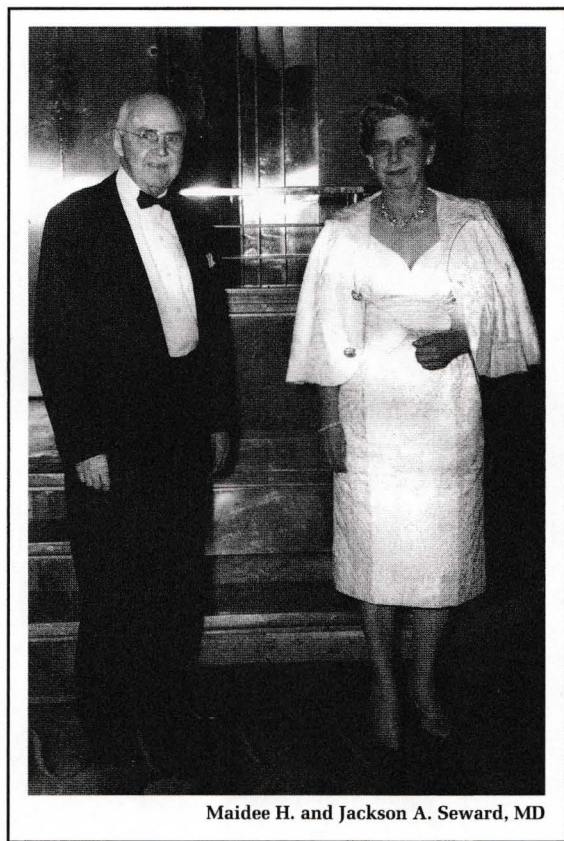


Ted Stoddard adjusts the nicking in the Great flue work

AUER HALL, JACOBS SCHOOL OF MUSIC
 INDIANA UNIVERSITY
 BLOOMINGTON, INDIANA
 C.B. FISK INC., OPUS 135
 57 independent voices, 70 stops
 68 ranks, 3,945 pipes

GREAT (Manual I)		POSITIVE (Manual II, enclosed)	
16	Montre	16	Quintaton
8	Montre	8	Principal
8	Gambe	8	Viole d'amore
8	Spire Flute	8	Unda maris
8	Flûte harmonique	8	Gedackt
4	Prestant	8	Flute celeste II
4	Chimney Flute	4	Octave
2%	Quinte	4	Violina
2	Doublette	4	Hohlflöte
1%	Terz	2%	Nasard
	Plein jeu harmonique II-VI	2	Doublette
	Plein jeu VI	2	Quarte de Nasard
16	Trommet	1%	Tierce
8	Trommet	1%	Larigot
8	Trompette		Mixture IV
4	Clairon	16	Clarinet
		8	Corno pean
		8	Tuba mirabilis

SWELL (Manual III, enclosed)		PEDAL	
16	Bourdon	32	Principal (ext. Montre)
8	Diapason	16	Contrebasse
8	Viole de gambe	16	Montre (Gt.)
8	Voix céleste	16	Soubasse
8	Flûte traversière	16	Bourdon (Sw.)
8	Bourdon	10% *	Quinte
4	Dulciane	8	Octave
4	Flûte octavante	8	Flûte (ext. Contrebasse)
2%	Nasard	8	Violoncelle (Gt.)
2	Octavin	8	Spire Flute (Gt.)
1%	Tierce	8	Bourdon (ext. Soubasse)
	Plein jeu IV	4	Octave
16	Basson	4	Flûte (ext. Contrebasse)
8	Trompette	32	Contra Posaune
8	Hautbois	16	Bombarde
8	Cromorne	16	Posaune (ext. 32)
8	Voix humaine	8	Trommet (Gt.)
4	Clairon	8	Trompette (Gt.)
		4	Clairon (Gt.)



Maidee H. and Jackson A. Seward, MD

COUPLERS AND ACCESSORIES

- Positive to Great
- Swell to Great
- Swell to Positive
- Great Octaves graves
- Great to Pedal
- Positive to Pedal
- Swell to Pedal
- Swell to Pedal 4
- Great and Positive Tremulant
- Swell Tremulant
- Flexible Wind
- Cymbelstern
- Nightingale
- Positive, Swell, and Crescendo Pedals

Kowalshyn Servopneumatic Lever: provides a pneumatic assist (similar to a Barker Machine but more refined) to the Great key action. It also allows the addition of the "Octaves graves" coupler to the organ. This couples the servopneumatic lever to itself one octave lower. Therefore, it couples the Great to itself at sub-octaves, and any division coupled to the Great also appears on the Great at sub-octaves.

Manuals CC-c⁴, bone naturals, ebony sharps; Fisk pedalboard CC-g¹.
 Mechanical key action, electric solenoid stop action, and SSOS combination action

*The Quinte 10% is an extension of the Soubasse 16' or the Contrebasse 16' if it is drawn.

UPCOMING 2010 ORGAN DEPARTMENT EVENTS

June 21-26:

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Sign up now to be part of this inspirational week including internationally acclaimed faculty; introductory classes in carillon, harpsichord, organ tuning, and church music skills; and more!
 Contact Dr. David Lamb at lambd61@sbcglobal.net

September 16-18:

BACH TO SCHOOL

First Annual Fall Organ Conference

Including the world premiere of the newest scholarly edition of Bach's *Clavierübung III*, Wayne Leupold Editions, and presentations by editors Christoph Wolff, George Stauffer, and Quentin Faulkner.



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