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the GRAND OPHICLEIDE

Journal of the Atlantic City Convention Hall Organ Society, Inc.

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Nature's Glories Lavishly Displayed in Atlantic City's vast Municipal Auditorium

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Atlantic City Convention Hall
Organ Society, Inc.*

1009 Bay Ridge Avenue, PMB 108, Annapolis, Maryland 21403
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On The Cover — Penny postcard of flower show held in Main Auditorium of Convention Hall, Atlantic City, which included a complete sunken garden. Exhibit area — 268,000 square feet. Date unknown, but postcards were one cent from 1928-1952. The organ would have been played often during this show and the combination of music, flowers and trees in an indoor setting must have been something to behold.

PRESS RELEASE

From: The Historic Organ Restoration Committee, Inc
December 13, 2006

The historically significant Midmer-Losh pipe organ in Atlantic City's Boardwalk Hall (formerly Convention Hall) under the auspices of the New Jersey Sports and Exposition Authority, has received one of the nation's most prestigious awards. A "Save America's Treasures" grant of \$100,000 has been awarded in recognition of the world's largest pipe organ and the present ongoing mission to restore it to its former glory.

The grant reads: "Built in 1928, the Midmer-Losh Pipe Organ is the largest, loudest and most complex working musical instrument ever constructed and remains a functional and integral component of the National Historic Landmark Hall (Boardwalk Hall)".

This grant marks an important fund raising effort, and acknowledges both the historical significance of this amazing instrument and the need to restore the pipe organ housed in Boardwalk Hall which is listed on the National Registry of Historic Places and also designated a National Historical Landmark.

Save America's Treasures is a national effort to protect "America's threatened cultural treasures, including historic structures, collections, works of art, maps and journals that document and illuminate the history and culture of the United States." Established by Executive Order in February 1998, Save America's Treasures was originally founded as the centerpiece of the White House National Millennium Commemoration and as a public-private partnership that included the White House, the National Park Service and the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Dedicated to the preservation and celebration of America's priceless historic legacy, Save Americas Treasures works to help ensure that future generations will have opportunity to experience our past and understand our identity as a community and as a nation. www.saveameericastreasures.org



Atlantic City's Auditorium and Convention Hall could hold a gathering of 65,000 people. It boasts the world's largest pipe organ. Regulation football games have been played on a real turf field laid out on its big main floor. It is the site of the well-publicized annual Beauty Pageant.

A Dark Cloud on the Horizon?

Las Vegas Casino mogul Steve Wynn is reported in the press to be teaming up with Donald Trump to create a \$3 billion mega-resort that could dominate the heart of Atlantic City's Boardwalk. It is rumored that they might consider demolishing Boardwalk Hall for the project, or rebuild it as a mall of some sort. Any such proposals for will be met with considerable resistance by the National Parks Service, the New Jersey Dept. of Environmental Protection, and other interested parties. The building and organs are listed in the National Registry of Historic Places and also have National Landmark status. The Hall is now the only large-scale entertainment venue in the area and, since its renovation, has become highly rated among pop culture performing arts groups in America. The ACCHOS continues to monitor developments.

PART TWO

Five Days In Six Chambers

by Stephen D. Smith

I have approached the subject of pipe numbers from a number of angles, and included among the documentary evidence I have studied are: (1) The instrument's actual contract (complete with signatures and seals); (2) A "Working Contract" (which includes appended notes showing alterations to the printed content); and (3) all 29 of the instrument's invoices (which detail *hundreds* of items). In addition to this material, I have studied the contents of all Auditorium organ stop lists I have been able to acquire. Furthermore, during my five days in the chambers, I took a "sample count" of pipes from departments in order to establish the likely number of pipes in each rank. I reckon that I counted about 12,000 pipes in the six chambers I had access to. When a survey of one of the world's other greatest organs was conducted recently, it was discovered that a number of straight ranks which, reportedly, had 73 pipes had, in fact, only 61, and I wanted to know if numbers had been similarly *inflated* in the case of the Auditorium organ. The short answer is "No, they haven't."

Another consideration in my calculations was the stop-keys on the consoles, for surely they would help indicate the number of pipes in a stop? (bearing in mind that derivations are shown by the stop's number engraved on its stop-keys). Therefore, if a department has a compass of, say, 73 notes, it stands to reason that its straight stops will have 73 pipes per rank, whilst its extended stops will have 73 plus 12 for each additional octave.

I do not believe that anyone has previously considered the subject of pipe numbers in such detail, taking into account all of these various factors. I'm not even convinced that Emerson Richards knew exactly how many pipes there were in the instrument, as there are a number of instances in the contract where he specified too few or too many pipes for

the available registers. In the case of the Swell-Choir, for example, he specified 97 pipes for each and every stop, despite the fact that less were required for some stops and more were necessary for others. For the Pedal organ, he sometimes underestimated the number of pipes, but this was probably because he changed some of his ideas and neglected to include them in the contract.

Briefly, this is what happened: In the very first contract (specifying an organ of some 43,000 pipes) there was to be a "Grand Choeur" department, playable from the Choir manual and comprised of a selection of stops duplexed from the Pedal Right and Pedal Left. However, when the specifications were revised — supposedly in order to reduce the cost of the instrument — Richards came up with the idea of a "Grand Choir" (derived solely from Pedal Left voices) on the first manual *and* a "Grand Great" (derived solely from Pedal Right voices) on the second manual. When it came to printing the *revised* contract, Richards did not alter all of the details to take account of these changes (in fact, this scaled-down contract was largely a reprint of the original, but with 158 stops deleted). Therefore, not all of the Pedal stops which were now to be playable from the "Grand Choir" and "Grand Great" departments were indicated.

One error in the Pedal organ's pipe numbers concerns the Right side's *Tibia Clausa*, which is listed as having 85 pipes. This is enough to provide notes for its 8' register on the Grand Great (sounding the 8' pipe at the CC key and the 16' pipe at the CCC key), but as the stop includes a 32' octave, there must be 97 pipes. To check out this theory, I played though the entire rank, from bottom to top, and discovered that there are indeed 97 pipes, not 85. Richards made similar errors with a number of other Pedal stops, some of which I also played or visually

inspected in order to establish the truth of the matter. Here are the Pedal organ's numbers: 109 pipes: *Principal* (Right), *Fagotto* (Left). 97 pipes: *Tibia Clausa* (Right), *Trumpet* (Right), *Diaphone* (Left), *Diapason* (Left), *Bombard* (Left). 85 pipes: *Tibia Major* (Right), *Viol* (Right), *Bombardon* (Right), *Grand Ophicleide* (Right), *Diaphone-Dulzian* (Right), *Diaphonic Diapason* (Left), *Bass Viol* (Left), *Tibia Clausa* (Left). 68 pipes: *Tierce* (Right), *Septieme* (Right). 44 pipes: *Major Posaune* (Left). 39 pipes: *Diaphone Phonon* (Right).

The only two straight stops on the 21-voice Pedal organ are the Pedal Left's 16' *Major Diapason* (32 pipes) and the seven-rank *Stentor Sesquialtera* (224 pipes). Eighty-eight registers are derived from the 19 extended stops and, in total, the seven-manual console possesses an amazing 182 Pedal organ stop-keys (including manual duplexes but excluding percussions, couplers, and second touch registers).

Stops on the **Unenclosed Choir** organ have 73 pipes per rank, and straight stops on the enclosed **Choir** also have this number. The highest octave of pipes (notes 62–73) in these ranks will sound when the 12 uppermost keys (c#4–c5) of the Choir manual are played. For convenience, I generally refer to this top octave of pipes as *extra pipes*. These *extra pipes* also ensure that the Octave coupler does not *run out* of notes to sound when playing in the c#3–c4 octave of the keyboard.

It would seem that *extra pipes* are also provided for the enclosed Choir organ's four extended stops: *Dulciana* (16'–5¹/₃', 92 pipes); *Dolce* (4'–1'), and *Contra Tromba* (16'–4'), 97 pipes; *Melodia* (16'–2'), 109 pipes. The flute celeste, *Unda Maris*, was originally to have 61 pipes (Tenor C–c5) but, according to the working contract, 12 stopped pipes were added for the notes CC–Tenor C. The two-rank *Voix Celeste* is reported as having 134 pipes (one rank



Treble pipes of the Melodia. When workmen gouged a hole in the chamber's wall for a new service pipe (visible in the top left of picture 6), these pipes were covered with plaster and other debris. The same thing has happened in other chambers.



A view of the enclosed Choir organ. Among the stops on this chest are the mixtures (right) and higher-pitched voices. The wooden pipes belong to the extended Melodia rank. Evidence of water damage can be seen on the walls.

from CC-c⁵ and the other from tenor C to c⁵).

In the **Great** organ, there are 73 pipes per rank (CC-c⁵) in all stops except the extended *Principal* (32'-2', 121 pipes) and *Double Diapason* 1 (16'-4', 97 pipes). Also, the 17th rank in the *Furniture* has only 49 pipes (middle C-c⁵). This was an additional rank and although the stop-keys on the consoles indicate a composition of five ranks there are, actually, six.

Previous stop lists for the **Great-Solo** department's two divisions all agree on pipe numbers; the totals being 1,267 for the "Organ" (flue) division and 1,008 for the "Orchestral" (woodwind/reed) division. However, I counted *all* of the reed pipes in the Orchestral division and am therefore able to disprove some of the numbers given in previous stop lists, e.g. the *French Horn* (stop 98) has 85 pipes, not 97. Some ranks in this division have *extra pipes* but others have not, e.g. the *Vox Baryton* has 85 pipes (73 notes for its 16' and 8' pitches), whereas the *Vox Humana* has 73 pipes (61 notes for its 8' and 4' pitches).

The division's four straight reed stops have 73 pipes each. The *Oboe Horn*, *Saxophone* (stop 96), and *English Horn* have 97 pipes and are all playable at 16'-8'-4' pitches. Also available at these pitches are the *French Horn* (stop 98), *Vox Baryton*, and *Krummhorn*. These three stops have 85 pipes each.

The division's only flue stop, the *Flute Twelfth* was originally on the Solo organ but, at a fairly early stage, it swapped places with the Orchestral division's straight *French Horn* (stop 104). Originally, the *French Horn* had 73 pipes, but the top 12 were omitted when it was moved to the 61-note Solo chest. Likewise, the *Flute Twelfth* originally had 61 pipes, and this is the number I have used in my calculations for the department, as I did not note whether or not 12 extra pipes have been added now that it resides on a 73-note chest.

At the back of the Orchestral division's box is one

octave of flue pipes, ranging from 2'-1'. These do not appear to belong to a speaking stop, and were probably provided for tuning purposes in this all-reed division. Therefore, they have *not* been included in my pipe number calculations.

Previous stop lists seem to indicate that most of the stops in the Great-Solo's "Organ" division have *extra pipes* but, personally, think this is unlikely. However, when I reviewed my notes about the pipes in this division, they did not make sense, so it seems that my count somehow went awry. Therefore, until such time as I am able to confirm which stops, if any, in this division do indeed have *extra pipes*, I have allocated the minimum number necessary to provide each register with 61 notes, rather than 73.

Consequently, the figures are as follows: *Gemshorn* (8'-1/4'), 121 pipes; *Wald Flute* (16'-2'), *Geigen Principal* (16'-2'), *Gemshorn Terz* (6²/₅'-4⁴/₅'), and *Gemshorn Quint* (5¹/₃'-2²/₃'), 97 pipes. The *Tibia Clausa* (16'-2²/₃') has 92 pipes; the *Gemshorn Celeste* (8'-1³/₅') has 89; and the *Horn Diapason* (8'-2') and *Gemshorn Septieme* (4⁴/₇'-1¹/₇') both have 85. Finally, there are four 73-pipe stops; *Diapason Phanon*, *Doppel Gedeckt*, *Viola d'Gamba*, and *Vox Celeste*, all of which are available at 8' and 4' pitches.

This gives a total of 1,152 pipes — 115 short of the number given in previous stop lists for the division.

The **Swell** organ is something of a peculiarity. On the main console, it is played from a 73-note keyboard (GGG-g⁴), and most of its stops have an 80-note compass (CC-g⁵), providing an octave and a half of notes above the c⁴ key — that's seven notes *higher* than the top C on a 73-note rank! These highest notes will only sound when the Swell's octave coupler is in use, as they have no manual keys of their own. Conversely, the lowest five keys of the Swell manual have no *pipes* of their own and exist largely for cosmetic reasons. However, they will sound notes from the Grand Choir if that department is coupled to the Swell manual.

Although most of the Swell organ's ranks have 80 pipes per rank, previous stop lists have indicated only 73 for some ranks. I was puzzled at the provision of 80 pipes for the *Traverse Flute* and

Orchestral Piccolo but not for the *Octave* and *Fifteenth*, both of which reportedly had 73 pipes. My sample count of ranks in this department included two stops which, supposedly, had 73 pipes but, in fact, they too had 80. Therefore, it does not seem unreasonable, in my view, to assume that all the Swell's straight stops have 80 pipes, and I have revised the pipe numbers accordingly (incidentally, this is one of the few occasions where I have estimated upwards, and only four stops are involved — 28 pipes, in total).

Following the addition to the Swell organ of the *Cymbal*, with 80 pipes per rank, it was decided to provide the other mixtures' ranks with this number too. The *Octave* and the *Fifteenth* then seem to have followed suit — perhaps because their 73-pipe ranks seemed rather incongruous in a diapason chorus comprised of unisons, a double, and mixtures all with 80 pipes per rank. The only stops with more than 80 pipes per rank are the four 104-pipe units (*Double Diapason*, *Contra Gamba*, *Double Trumpet*, and *Double Horn*) which are all available at 16' and 4' pitches.

The first *Viol Celeste* was not included among my sample count, so I have listed 134 pipes; the commonly accepted number for this stop. I know that the second *Viol Celeste* has 146 pipes because I counted them. The reason for these compound celestes not having a compass of 80 notes, like every other stop on the department, is just another of the Swell organ's peculiarities.

My count of five stops in the **Swell-Choir** organ revealed no ranks with *extra pipes*, but I may have been unlucky and, by chance, counted only those which do not have them. However, because I have no evidence of their existence in this department, I have for the purpose of this exercise assumed that each register has a compass of 61 notes. The pipe numbers are, therefore, as follows: *Gemshorn* (8'-1/4'), 121 pipes; *Fifth* (5 1/3'-1 1/3'), 109 pipes; *Gemshorn Celeste II* (8'-1 3/5'), 89 pipes; *Clarabella* (8'-2 2/3'), 80 pipes. The *Doppel Gedeckt* (16'-2') and *Third* both have 97 pipes, and the *Gemshorn Celeste I* (8'-1 1/3') and *Stopped Diapason* (16'-2 2/3') both have 92. The remaining nine stops have 85 pipes each and are all available at three pitches.

In comparison with many of the other

departments, the **Solo** organ is like a breath of fresh air. It is a straightforward 61-notes-per-register department, but the *Major Flute*, *Tuba Magna*, and *Trumpet Profunda* units have 85 pipes each.

The **Fanfare** organ also has 61 notes per register, so calculating the number of pipes here is a fairly easy affair too, although extension is comprehensively used among the reed stops. Therefore, all ranks have 61 pipes except the following: *Trombone* (32'-4') and *Bombardon* (16'-2'), 97 pipes; *Posaune* (16'-4') and *Tromba Quint* (10 2/3'-2 2/3'), 85 pipes; *Harmonic Tuba* (8' and 4') and *Tromba Tierce* (6 2/5' and 3 1/5'), 73 pipes (there is a slim possibility that the *Tromba Tierce* has 85 pipes, because it appears on the five-manual console at 1 3/5', but as it is not available at this pitch on the main console, I doubt that the extra 12 pipes exist). The department's only extended flue stop, the *Major Flute* (16'-4') also has 85 pipes.

The **Echo** organ is another department with 61 notes per register. In theory, this means that calculating its pipe numbers should again be a simple task but, in this case, there are a few complicating factors.

In the contract, the *Spitz Flute Celeste II* is shown as a straight 8' rank from Tenor C, but hand-written notes in the working contract mention its conversion to a unit stop — providing 8', 3 1/5', and 1 3/5' pitches — with 77 pipes (61 notes for each mutation register and 49 for the unison). Other hand-written notes indicate the addition of the *Violone Celeste*. One entry states that this stop was to have 54 pipes, whilst another says 61. To confuse matters further, most other stop lists indicate 56 pipes! I have opted for the lowest of these three numbers, i.e. 54, because on the whole I would prefer my estimates to be *under* rather than *over*. The *Spire Flute* is widely reported as having 97 pipes, but this is not enough for its registers, which range from 16' to 1'. It may be the case that the top octave of the 1' is sounded by repeating the

highest octave in the 97-pipe rank, but nowhere in any of the contracts or other documents that I have seen is there any mention of this mechanism, and it is debatable as to whether the cost of 12 more pipes, etc. would be more or less expensive than the price of the repeating relays. I therefore believe that the *Spire Flute* has 109 pipes.

So, all stops on the Echo organ have 61 pipes per rank, except the three mentioned above, and: *Violone* (32'-4') and *Clarabella* (16'-2'), 97 pipes. Each unified



Detailed examination of the ranks in the Gallery II organ is currently out of the question due to the condition of some pipework



reed (*Tuba d'Amour*, *Bassoon*, *Clarinet*, *Vox Humana II*) and the *Gamba* is available at 16'-8'-4' pitches and therefore has 85 pipes.

The **Gallery** organs generally have 73 notes per rank, but there are some exceptions. The *Flauto Maggiore* (Gallery II) and *Contra Diapason* (Gallery III), both available at 16' and 4' pitches, have 97 pipes each — 73 notes for each of their registers. Similarly, the *Diaphone* unit (Gallery I) has 85 pipes, or 73 notes for its 16' and 8' registers. However, the

Saxophone (Gallery IV) has only 61 notes for its 16'-8'-4" registers, a total of 85 pipes (the department's other ranks have 73 pipes).

Although most of the Gallery II organ's ranks have 73 pipes, many stop lists indicate that the *Harmonic Twelfth*, *Harmonic Piccolo*, and three-rank *Harmonic Mixture* have only 61-pipes per rank. This is both curious and unique in the Auditorium organ, as no other 73-note department has a stop with a 61-note compass. Although, in my calculations, I have indeed shown 61 pipes per rank for these three stops, I wonder if they actually have 73. Detailed examination of the ranks in the Gallery II organ is currently out of the question due to the condition of some pipework.

The only curiosity about the Gallery I organ is that the compass of both the *Diaphone* and *Mixture Mirabilis* is 73 notes

but, for the reeds, it is only 61. However, this arrangement is not perhaps so strange if the flues are viewed as part of the instrument's ensemble, together with the Great organ, etc. (it is obvious that the reeds — voiced on 100-inch wind! — are not designed to be part of the ensemble).

The **Brass Chorus** is another department of 73 pipes per rank. The 2' *Trombone* consists entirely of flue pipes, and is therefore useful for tuning purposes, whilst the three-rank *Tierce Mixture* includes 32 reed pipes in its composition. Originally, however, these reed pipes formed the basses of the 2' stop and the mixture consisted of flue pipes throughout. It is not known at what stage they swapped places.

On the three **String** organs, 73 pipes per rank is again the norm, with the four units which provide sub and octave registers (stops 254 and 265-267) having

97 pipes each. On String II, the *Stopped Flute* was originally to have been a straight 8' stop of 73 pipes, but a handwritten note in the working contract indicates its conversion to a unit providing registers at 5¹/₃', 4', and 2'. Therefore, 78 pipes are required if each of these registers is to have 61-notes, or 90 pipes if they are to have 73 notes. For the time being, I have assumed the lower number, since I am not able to prove the higher one.

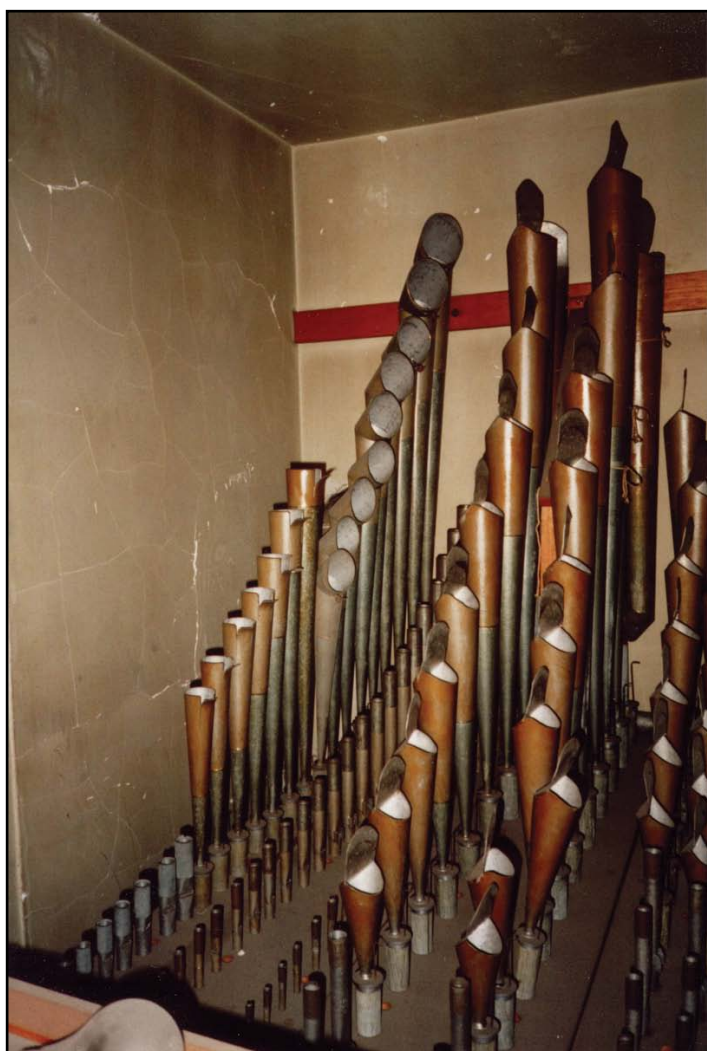
This brings us to the subject of two-rank celestes, the majority of which are to be found on the String organs (interestingly — or perhaps not — on the seven-manual console, all stop-keys controlling

two-rank celestes are located on the left jamb, with the single exception of the Choir organ's *Voix Celeste* stop-key which is on the right). The question regarding these compound celestes is: "Which have ranks to Tenor C only and which go all the way down to CC?" According to the contract and to the majority of stop lists, 16 of the 29 two-rank celestes have 146 pipes (both ranks from CC to c⁵) and 13 have 134 pipes (one rank from CC to c⁵ and the other from Tenor C to c⁵). I counted the pipes in about half-a-dozen of these stops throughout the instrument and found that, in every case, the number tallied with the figures given in the contract. So, armed with this precedent, I have concluded — rightly or wrongly — that *all* of the compound celestes have the number of pipes specified in the contract. It may, however, be the case that some of those which I did not count may have more or less pipes but, somehow, I think it unlikely.

The five-rank *String Mixture* in the String II organ is reported as having 61 pipes per rank and this is the number I have used in my calculations. All straight, single rank stops in the String organs have 73 pipes.

Here, then, are the revised figures, based upon the above findings:

DEPARTMENT	VOICES	RANKS	PIPES
PEDAL RIGHT	11	11	903
PEDAL LEFT	10	16	955
UNENCLOSED CHOIR	6	9	657
CHOIR	29	37	2792
GREAT	38	63	4647
GREAT-SOLO (ORGAN)	13	13	1152
GREAT-SOLO (ORCH)	12	12	972
SWELL	36	55	4456
SWELL-CHOIR	17	17	1542
SOLO	22	33	2085
FANFARE	21	36	2364
ECHO	22	27	1896
GALLERY I	4	10	754
GALLERY II	7	9	621
GALLERY III	6	9	681
GALLERY IV	8	8	596
BRASS CHORUS	8	10	730
STRING I	11	20	1436
STRING II	24	37	2658
STRING III	9	17	1217



The Brass Chorus's *Tierce Mixture* (three ranks nearest the wall) and *Tromba* mutations.

These figures give a total of 314 voices, 449 ranks, and 33,114 pipes. When the seven melodic and 16 non-melodic percussions are added to the 314 voices, the grand total is 337 stops.

As stated earlier on, it is unlikely that my figures are *exactly* correct but, even so, I believe them to be the most accurate to ever appear in print. I stand by them. The rationale behind them is both logical and consistent, being based on known facts. They are the result of long and very careful deliberation. Where there has been any doubt, I have usually opted for the lowest possible number, having regard for the stop's compass and its number of registers, etc. In this respect, the approach has been rather conservative, and any movement in numbers may well be upwards rather than downwards (especially in the case of the Great-Solo's Organ division and the Swell-Choir, where I have shown no extra pipes for any of the ranks). Nevertheless, I do not fear my figures being proved wrong, one way or the other, and I have to confess that the number of 32,900-plus still lurks in the back of my brain as being the most likely total.

As to the condition of the organ... Well, broadly speaking, there are three categories:

1. Departments that are currently working, i.e. those in the Right Stage chamber.
2. Departments that could probably be brought back into playing order with relative ease. Dennis McGurk reckons that the Left Stage chamber's departments might play if the wind was switched on, but he anticipates a vast number of ciphers and other teething problems. It would probably take months for these departments to settle down and get used to being played again, and they would have to be used frequently and regularly for this to happen. Also, the entire Left Stage chamber needs dusting! In fact, all of the chambers, except the Right Stage are very dusty but, generally, the pipes appear to be in a relatively good condition, although they too would benefit from cleaning, new tuning slides, etc.
3. Departments that require a lot of attention. In some cases, pipes, racks, top boards, and even chests may have to be completely replaced. The Gallery II and String II organs particularly come to mind in this regard. From what Dennis tells me, the Fanfare, Echo, and String III organs are in a terrible condition and I fear that much in those departments is already damaged well beyond repair, so replacement is the only solution.

The electro-mechanical combination action for the seven-manual console is located in rooms below the stage, where it was subjected to high temperatures from unlagged steam and hot water pipes. Consequently, it never functioned properly and became so unreliable that it was disconnected altogether in 1936 or there-

abouts. Less than a decade later, in 1944, it was wrecked by the flooding that accompanied the hurricane of September that year. It has not worked since, and any attempt to repair it would be both expensive and, I suspect, futile. In my opinion, it should be replaced with a solid state action, whilst the original mechanism should be retained for interest's sake.



Underside of a chest in the String II organ. Some leathers appear to be in reasonable condition, whilst others have obviously been affected by water.



Some of the remains of the remote combination action for the seven-manual console.



Pipes from some ranks in the String II organ are stored under their water-damaged chests.

Dennis McGurk, Organ Curator

Dennis McGurk was hired as Assistant Curator in 1959 and became Curator in 1984 when William Rosser was no longer able to work due to ill health. Dennis retired in 1998, after serving 39 years working on the Midmer-Losh and Kimball organs in Boardwalk Hall.

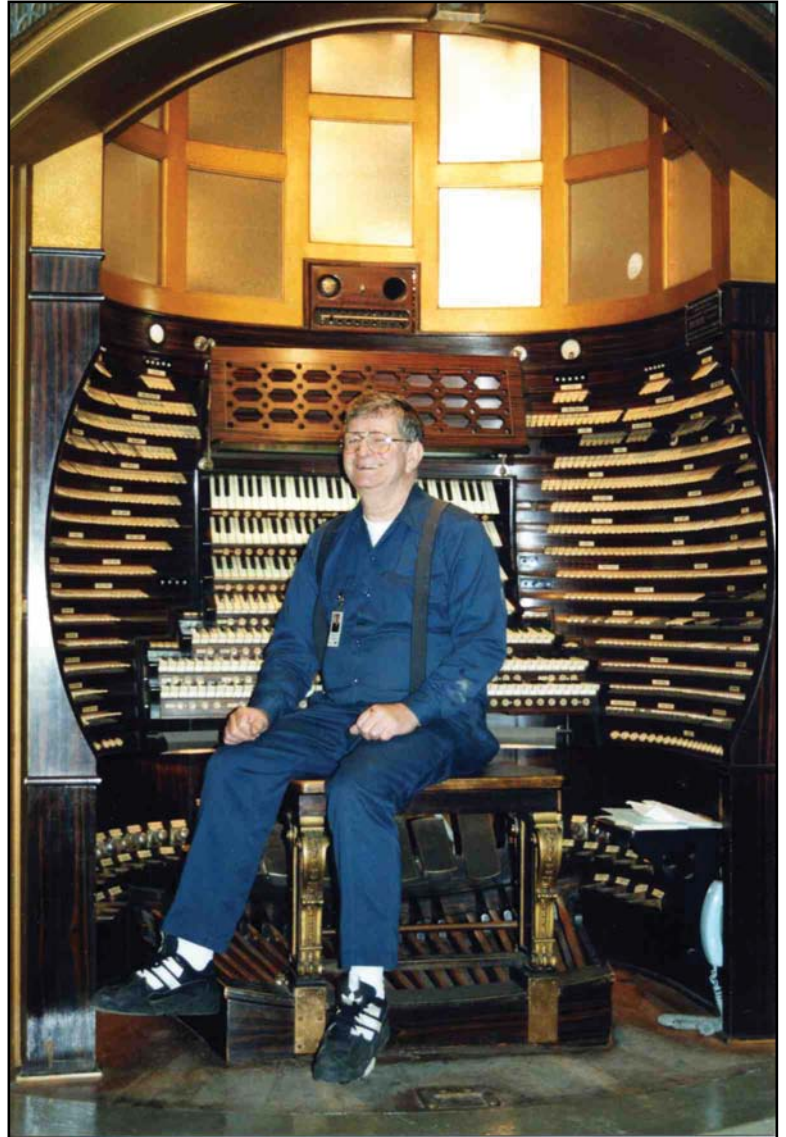
On June 22., 1962, Emerson L. Richards wrote to George Losh, saying:

“The organ is still going strong under the care of William Rosser and his assistant (Dennis McGurk) who are engaged full time (forty hours a week) in keeping up both organs.

“They have the organ shop you used and equipped with machinery and tools to do the job. The organ was in the care of Roscoe Evans for twenty years, until he retired. The organ has survived several hurricanes, but one ruined the combination action and that has not been repaired although Rosser threatens to try it. It is wonderful how well your chests stand up. All the downstairs reservoirs and motors have been flooded and repaired.

“The organ is in use by most of the conventions that come here and is quite busy.”

In the years following the departure of Rosser, Dennis McGurk was saddled with lack of budget,



Dennis McGurk in November 1998.



Control panel for the blower motors. From left to right, top to bottom: Generator, Low Great, High Great, Low Swell, High Swell, Echo, Fanfare, Compressor (for the 4 reeds on 100" of wind.)

interest of management to maintain and preserve the organs, and lack of assistant personnel. His only course of action was to maintain the Right Stage chamber, which he did with dedication and aplomb. He oversaw the installation of new AC motors for the Midmer-Losh in the early 90s – a task expertly done as can be seen in the photo of the new control panel for the motors and generator.



Timothy Hoag worked with Dennis as an assistant in the later years, and was the resident 'hall organist' for all events using the organ in the main auditorium. One of his duties was the maintenance and restoration of the reeds in the 100" Grand Ophicleide stop.

Dennis did an extensive amount of re-leathering in the Right Stage chamber and kept the chamber in a clean and well-maintained condition.

Fortunately, management allowed him to conduct many tours of the organ by visiting organists and organ professionals, including those just interested in seeing this remarkable creation. Dennis can be seen briefly in the home movie section in the Special Features section of *The Senator's Masterpiece* DVD available from the Organ Historical Society.



Timothy Hoag, Assistant to Dennis McGurk in the 90s



Dennis McGurk in his younger years at the console. The person to the right is not identified.

The 1964 John Armstrong Recordings

On November 1, 1964, former Curator John Rosser hosted a day-long organ event at Boardwalk Hall, parts of which were recorded on tape by John Armstrong. These original master tapes have been gifted to ACCHOS.

A morning session was held in the Ballroom and an afternoon session was held in the Main Auditorium. Artists included resident organist at the time, Barbara Fesmire, Lowell Ayers and others. There is a moment in the Ballroom where you can hear Barbara Fesmire practicing on the Midmer-Losh coming through the walls of the Ballroom.

Some (un-processed) excerpts from these sessions are on the ACCHOS website in the Gallery section. Recently, Board Member and computer expert Harry Bellangy has been able to create remarkable restorations of these old recordings using Adobe Audition®, which has dramatically reduced all noise artifacts. The result is clean, quiet recordings, without tape hiss, that reveal some wonderful subtleties and musical tonalities of the Midmer-Losh organ unlike any other recordings to date, e.g. Robert Elmore's recording of *Bach on the Biggest* and *The Auditorium CD*.

A 55-minute compilation is under preparation for eventual release as a CD or a streaming audio format.

Reg. No.	Clerk	ACCOUNT FORWARDED
1	Midmer-Losh	
2	Rehearsal - Test take	
3	742 Tapes	
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Recording log and microphone placement diagram by John Armstrong

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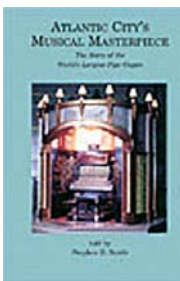
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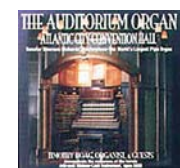
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