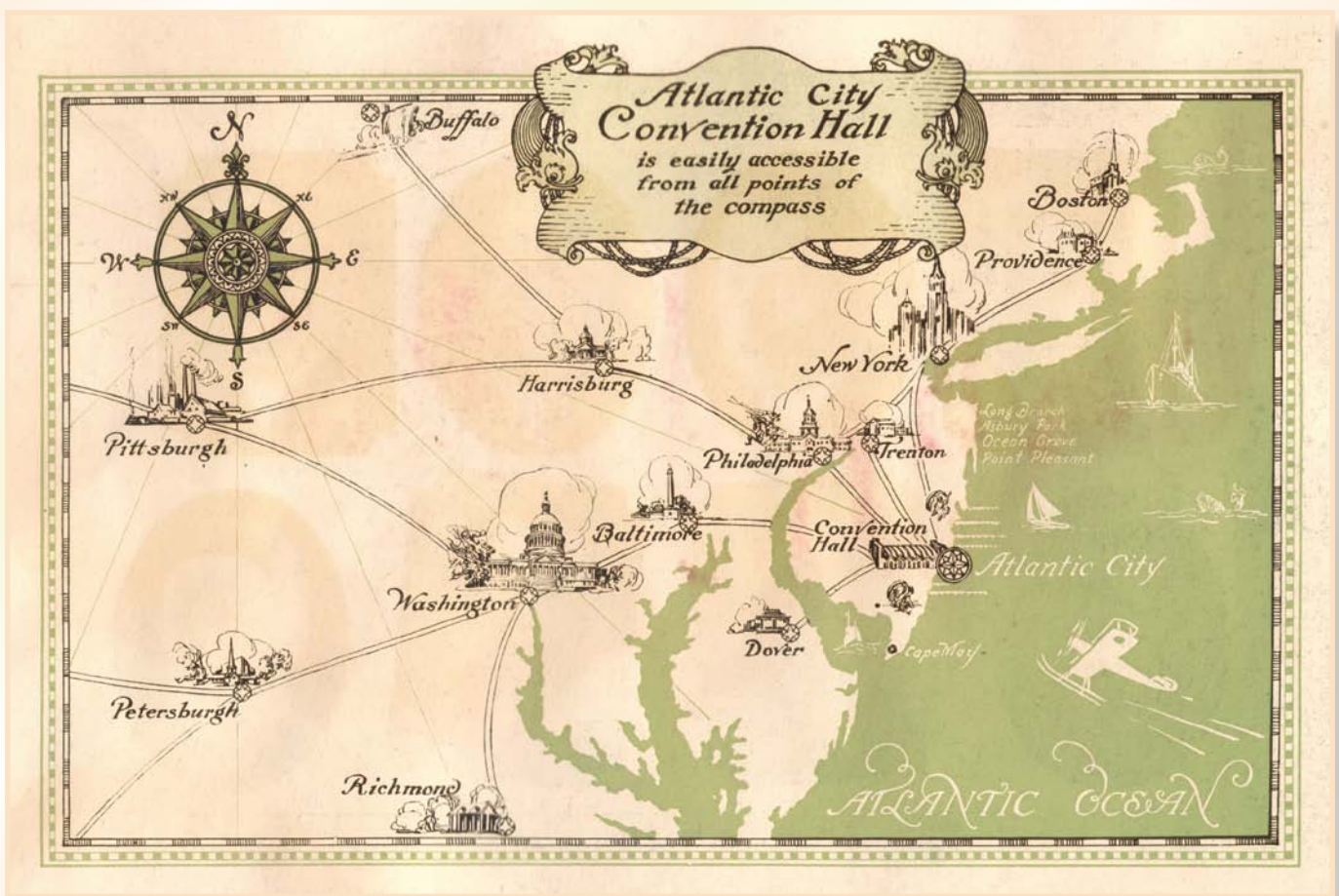


The GRAND OPHICLEIDE

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

Issue 36

Summer, 2007



the **GRAND OPHICLEIDE**

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

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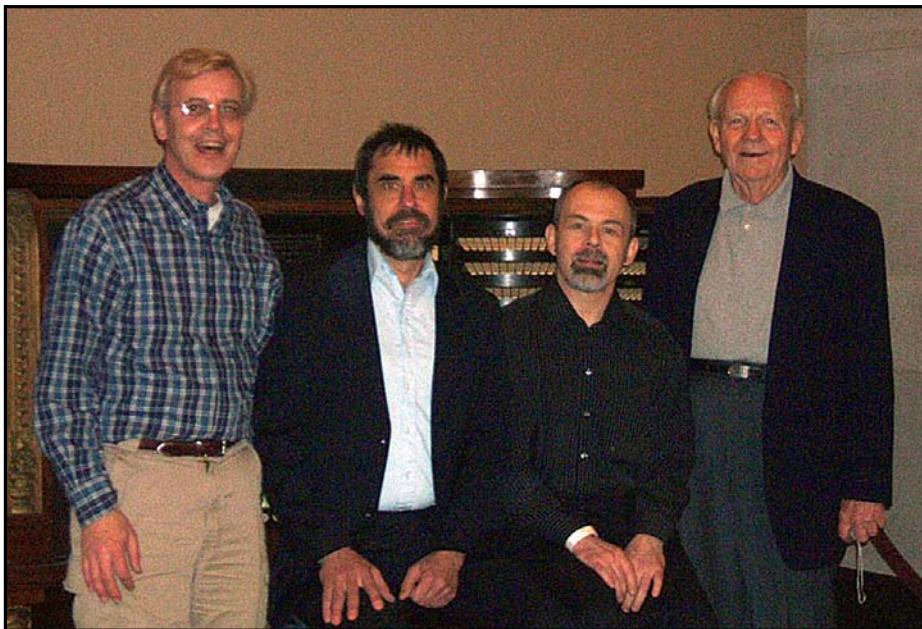
On The Cover — All roads head to Atlantic City and the Midmer-Losh Pipe Organ. This publicity map is a quaint reminder of the early days of Boardwalk Hall and the intention to attract as many visitors as possible to the area.

New Curator Appointed for Boardwalk Hall Organs

Carl Loeser from Plainfield, New Jersey has been appointed Curator of the Boardwalk Hall pipe organs in Atlantic City, New Jersey. He is the recipient of the Lillian Levy Curatorial Chair of the Boardwalk Hall pipe organs, dedicated to the late Lillian Levy, an Historic Organ Restoration Committee board member, three times the chairperson of the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, and a great champion of the arts in Southern New Jersey.

Mr. Loeser, a New Jersey native, brings a variety of expertise to the position, having worked in the pipe organ field for 30 years.

Following college, Mr. Loeser pursued a career in Electrical Engineering and concurrently started a side business doing organ maintenance and tuning. In 1988, he decided to switch to pipe organ work on a full time basis. Since that time he has been involved in a variety of venues. These have included assisting in instal-



Dennis Cook, HORC Board Member; Curator Carl Loeser; Curt Mangel; HORC Board Member and Curator of the Wanamaker organ; Jack Clotworthy, HORC Board Member and ACCHOS Secretary/Treasurer.

Ballroom Kimball Organ Restoration in the Works

A project to restore the Ballroom Kimball pipe organ has been funded by the HORC. Once the restoration specification is completed, it will be sent to a list of pre-qualified bidders who can meet the requirements set forth in pre-bid documents. Plans call for the removal of the console from its permanent location in the “organ

balcony” to a movable platform on the main floor of the auditorium, and re-installing the Kimball grand piano in the organ balcony. The grand piano was part of the original installation completed in 1931, but was sold many years later. It was re-acquired in 2002 through a convoluted series of circumstances.

lation of new organs, or providing factory authorized service for the Schantz, Casavant, Reuter and Austin pipe organ companies. He has also done extensive rebuilding and restoration work, and provided tuning and maintenance services on a wide range of instruments from 2 to 461 ranks in size. Much of his restoration experience has involved instruments on higher pressures, which will lend itself well to the Boardwalk Hall organs. Among these projects was the complete restoration of the Ethereal Division of the John Wanamaker organ, which had suffered severe water damage, as well as the wear and tear that all high-pressure instruments suffer over time, two conditions which have similarly affected parts of the Midmer-Losh organ.

He is very anxious to move forward, and his initial activities will include bringing the Right Stage Chamber of the Midmer-Losh Organ back on line during 2007, as well as developing detailed plans for the complete restoration of both the Midmer-Losh and Kimball instruments. He is looking forward to working with the Boardwalk Hall staff and is thrilled with the opportunity to be directly involved with both of these historic organs that have been left largely unattended since December 1998 with the retirement of the third Curator in succession, Dennis McGurk.

Looking up at the DDDDD to GGGGG# pipes. These pipes range in length from 56⁸/₉' to 40²⁴/₂₅'. Due to the camera angle, the pipes look straight but, actually, they are flared. On the right are pipes belonging to the 32-foot octave of the Great organ's *Sub Principal*.



The World's Largest Organ Pipes

by Stephen D. Smith

Like the 100-inch reeds, the 64-foot stop underwent a number of changes and was the subject of considerable experimentation. It is located in the Right Stage chamber and is a *Dulzian* for most of its compass, but the lowest 22 notes—from 64-foot C to 32-foot A—are sounded by diaphone pipes.

The original specifications included two full-length 64-foot stops — a wooden *Diaphone Profunda* (40" × 40" scale) on the Pedal Right and a metal *Dulzian* (30" scale) on the Pedal Left. In the revised

design, the reed was retained (its stop-key was to be engraved *Cor Profunda*) but the *Diaphone* was cut, as Richards feared it would crowd-out the chamber. Because the Pedal Right's *Trombone* unit, with its 32-foot octave, had also been deleted in the revised scheme, there was to be just one 32-foot reed (*Bombardon*) on the Right side and three (*Bombard*, *Dulzian*, *Fagotto*) on the Pedal Left. Perhaps for reasons of balance, it was decided to move the *Dulzian* to the Right chamber, but its original stop number, 17, was retained—thus placing it

out of sequence with the other Pedal Right stops (numbered 1–10).

The 64-foot stop's largest pipes were constructed in sections on the upper level of the Right Stage chamber. When each pipe was complete, it was lowered over the end of the platform (bottom left corner of photograph p. 5, top) and positioned nearby to the chamber's main floor.

It seems that tests were carried out on the giant CCCC pipe using an experimental reed tongue, but the tone was not considered desirable as its harmonics were louder



Pipes for the 64-foot stop in various stages of construction. The completed pipe is the 64-foot, and sections of the CCCCC# pipe are stacked horizontally against the wall. To the right of the pipe is one of its builders (name unknown) and on the left is Seibert Losh. Below this platform – which is now occupied by the Solo and Great-Solo departments – are the basses of the Pedal Right stops and some of the Great organ's larger pipes.

was not met, so the decision was taken to provide a straight *Diaphone* as the instrument's 64-foot register. However, rather than provide an independent stop, the possibility of obtaining both reed and diaphone tone from the existing *Dulzian* resonators was explored.

Thus, of the 85 pipes in the proposed *Diaphone/Dulzian* stop, the lowest 12 would be diaphones; the next 20 would be capable of producing diaphone and reed tone making use of the dual-tone shallot; and the remaining 53 would be purely reeds.

The timber for the stop's 12 largest pipes came from a single Oregon fir tree that was reportedly 330 feet tall and more than

than the fundamental. Although leathering the shallot (as in the Contra Trombone at Sydney Town Hall, Australia—the world's only other full-length 64-foot stop) would have absorbed many of the overtones so that the fundamental could be better heard, the contract stated (in Chapter 4, paragraph 19) that this could only be done in “exceptional circumstances.” It seems that this criteria

785 years old.

The 64-foot pipe weighs approximately 3,350 pounds. Its inverted-pyramidal resonator measures 10" x 10" at the base and 27" x 27" at the open end (not 36" x 36", as is sometimes stated). Its spring weighs 14 pounds and the pallet attached to it is almost six inches wide. A light bulb within the boot

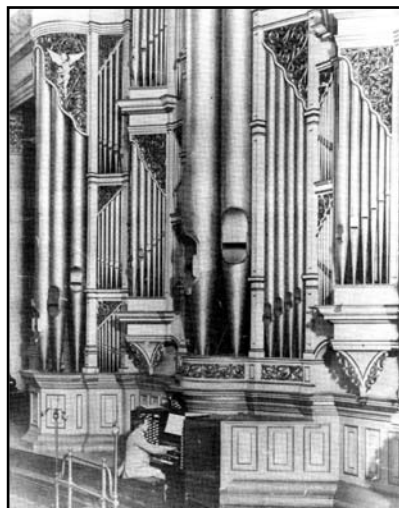
Continues on page 6



At floor level in the Right Stage chamber. Gradually, more and more of the 64-foot stop's pipes are built and maneuvered into position, but they are still without their boots. On the right (aligned with the light bulb) is the CCCCC# pipe, with CCCCC next to it. Arrayed across the picture (left to right) are the pipes for notes GGGGG# down to DDDDD (the latter being positioned next to CCCCC).

[Editor's Note: This article first appeared in the Winter 2001 issue of this newsletter and excerpts are re-printed here by popular request and to refresh the thoughts. These pipes are truly one of the most fascinating aspects of the Midmer-Losh pipe organ. There are only two full-length 64' stops in the world. One is the 64' Contra Trombone in the Sydney (Australia) Town Hall organ, and the other is the Dulzian in the Midmer-Losh in Atlantic City. The rare photo shows the noted organist, Marcel Dupré, looking at the low C of the Contra Trombone in Sydney. The photo has been judiciously cropped to hide the fact that Dupré was actually giving it the "finger"!]

In Nelson Barden's remarkable biography of Edwin H. Lemare (Part Two from the March 1986 issue of *The American Organist*), Lemare's 1903 visit to the Sydney organ is mentioned: “Hill's 127-stop organ in the Sydney Town Hall, with its 32' façade and unique 64' Contra Trombone, was in deplorable condition. The divisions were violently out of tune, the diapasons lacked any vestige of temperament, the reeds were raucous and choked with dirt....Lemare told the newspapers that an organ of this size is like a big garden; it wants daily attention to keep it in order.... After one listened to the 64' pipes, the other stops seemed for a while to sound an octave above their actual pitch. At one concert, Lemare used the 64' in an improvised thunderstorm that proved so realistic that an elderly lady ran from the hall, gasping, “Oh my, this is getting serious!” The city fathers forbade a repetition for fear the plaster ceiling would fall...”



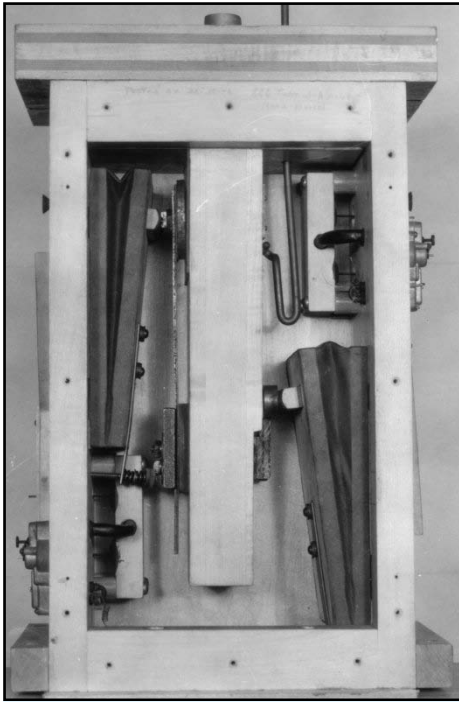
Lemare at the console of the Sydney Town Hall organ, July 1903

The big difference in the two 64' stops is that the Midmer-Losh version is intensely subtle and dramatic. There is nothing in the world quite like hearing it when added to a large ensemble. Those of us who have heard it can easily testify to its most remarkable and deeply profound effect.

The complete story can be found in Chapter 8 of Stephen Smith's book *Atlantic City's Musical Masterpiece*. See page 12 for details.



(Above) Dupré inspects low C of the 64' Contra Trombone; (left) The legendary organist and composer, Marcel Dupré.



Dulzian/Diaphone dual-tone mechanism. At left, a diaphone pallet covers an aperture at the top of the shallot and, on the right, is a reed tongue. The pneumatic motors pressed against one tone-producing mechanism, to prevent it fluttering, when the other was in use, since it would not be possible to use both voices simultaneously.

Continued from page 5

illuminates the mechanism, which can be viewed through a window as it vibrates at a mere eight cycles-per-second.

Sam Hovsepien, during his interview with Nelson Barden, related the following information on the subject:

“The 64-foot Diaphone pipes were built right in the chamber by a father and son team from Italy—I don’t remember their names. They were big men, both of them. The father was a stocky fellow and the boy, I think Frank was his name. The construction was like a square wooden Bombarde pipe and the 12 bottom notes were supposed to have used 10,000 feet of lumber.

“The 64-foot pipe was put together with nothing but glued-up tongue and groove joints. They had power equipment there to groove the lumber, I think it was a one-inch groove. Then they put in a one-inch spine and the next piece sat down on top of it and then they would clamp that up.

“They made the whole length in glued-up sections, you know, one piece stopped here, the next one went on, then the next to carry



The world’s largest organ pipes. Despite any uncertainty about the 64-foot’s voice, construction and installation of its pipes continued. The longer mitered pipe seen here is CCCCC and to the right of it, nearest the camera, is the CCCCC# (with an extended lower section, so that it is supported by the steel girder). The other flared pipes seen here are also from the 64-foot rank and the straight pipes against the wall are from the 32-foot octave of the Great organ’s Sub Principal.

it on out to 64 feet. The pipes were all built in one piece, then on the bottom five or six pipes, the miters were cut off and re-attached at a right angle. Bottom CCCCC was 40 feet long with a 24 feet miter. These pipes were very powerfully built but used no nails or screws in the whole length, they were all glued together. They were built right in the empty chamber, otherwise you could never have moved them.”

Hovsepien, having been born in 1910, was almost certainly the last member of the organ’s installation crew to die (during the 1990s) but, as the following story shows, he was very nearly the first.

“At the top of the chamber were steel beams that we hung a moving carriage on—the type of carriage that rolls along a horizontal steel beam, like they move stuff in factories with, and partway up was a big platform, which we called the mezzanine level. The 64-foot pipe was hoisted up horizontally to the platform with a chain hoist, and from there we had to drop the foot over the edge of the platform down toward the



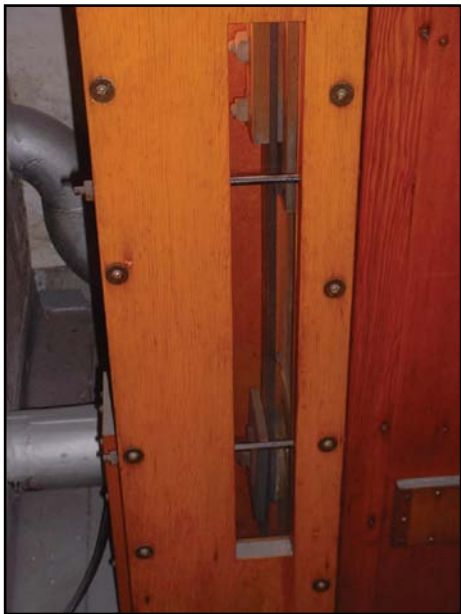
Boots of the DDDDD to GGGGG# pipes.



Dulzian pipes and Great-Solo swell boxes. The man seen here is standing next to the GGGGG# pipe, and the CCCCC and CCCCC# pipes (not visible) pass through the rear of the swell box (furthest from camera) containing the Orchestral division of the Great-Solo (the swell box nearest the camera is for the Great-Solo’s flues). The space in front of these swell boxes is now occupied by the Great organ’s chests.

floor and raise the mitered section, which was the heavy part, up to the top of the chamber.

“All of us were there, Mr. Van Wart and the whole crew, to put these pipes into place. I was hanging in a basket suspended from the ceiling beam to guide the carriage and the top of the pipe. They had lines all over it, ropes to guide it with, but they began to slip, and all of a sudden the damn thing got away from them and came right at me. But I was swinging ahead of the pipe in the basket, so I ducked my head out of the way, and when I got to the wall, I kicked away from the wall with all my might. The pipe



Boot and Beater of the 64-foot pipe.

came by my shoulder and kept on going... *crash* through the back wall of the chamber, into the organ shop beyond. The wall was hollow tile and it smashed all over.

"Fortunately the chain didn't let go and turn it loose, so the pipe just hung there. I was swinging back and forth up there in the basket, and when I looked down the rest of the guys were down there with their heads hanging. I shouted down, 'Are you fellows praying?' Mr. Van Wart looked up and said, 'Damn your soul, Sammy, you get down off there!' He had tears in his eyes. He had taken me to his house in Trenton many times and he was like a daddy to me. He and his wife didn't have any children, and they thought the world of me. 'Come on down,' he cried. 'Everybody quit.' We all went down to the ice cream parlor. He couldn't get over it. He said, 'Son, the Good Lord is looking after you today.'

"Who should come to town that day but George Losh, and there was nobody on the job. I happened to go back up to the organ chamber, so I said hello to George and he asked where everybody was. I said, 'Don't you know today is a holiday; a *Sam-is-alive* holiday?'

"He asked 'Sam who?' 'Me,' I said, and showed him the 64' pipe still hanging there where it had crashed through the wall. I said: 'I was in front of that. I just barely got out of the way, and Mr. Van Wart decided that we weren't going to work any more today.' George Losh put his head up against the wall and cried like a baby. Not because of my being saved, but because we weren't

working. That's the kind of man he was.

"The next day we got the big pipe into place and after that we were very careful how we put in the rest of them, one after the other right next to it. There were supposed to be two different boots and two reeds on the 64-foot's resonators...they hoped to get a deep 64-foot and a lighter tone out of the same resonator as well. [*This seems to confirm the two tones from two boots theory.*] I don't know why they thought it would work, but it didn't.

"The 64-foot set up quite a vibration. When we first played it, a lot of the sound absorbent bricks dropped right out of the ceiling—not in the chamber, but out there in the hall. Of course, they were light bricks but that ceiling was thirteen stories from the floor, so they didn't like the idea of anything falling down like that!

"And there was a terrible noise from one of the steel beams up in the middle of the auditorium ceiling; a rattling noise like a machine-gun that started fast and slowed down, then started up again.

"We climbed all the way up there, 135 feet above the floor, and found a cocked rivet an inch in diameter in one of the beams. When the 64-foot went on, the rivet would twist around and make an awful racket until it tightened up, and then it would untwist the other way and make the same noise. They had to take the rivet out, and replace it. They wondered if they made it solid, would something else break? We also had troubles with vibration that the fire doors made.

The 64-foot stop is best suited to underpinning combinations that are moderately loud in volume. In very big combinations it is lost and in smaller ones it is too loud. Although the stop probably has considerable fundamental tone, the human ear is not able to hear it, so its 32-foot harmonic is the most prominent component. Nevertheless, it certainly does create a sense of curiously unsettling profundity. The most audible sound is that of the pallet vibrating—a noise that was once described as sounding "like a helicopter hovering over the building."

The voicing of diaphone stops can vary from *smooth* to *reedy* in tone, and some organ builders have used them to provide bass notes for a variety of ranks. More than one organist has probably marveled at the smoothness of a 16-foot "Diapason" or the stringiness of a "Contra Gamba," little realizing that the tone is actually being produced

by diaphone pipes. In the 32-foot octave, most diaphones tend to sound *reedy*, regardless of their voicing, because the human ear is able to detect the beater's individual vibrations and interprets them as being reed-like (this is even truer for the 64-foot octave). For this reason, and because the diaphone pipes on the Auditorium organ's 64-foot stop are voiced towards reed tone in the first place, the changeover from reed pipes to diaphones is undetectable.

Although people often refer to the "64-foot Diaphone" in the Auditorium organ, the stop should be thought of as a 64-foot reed which, coincidentally, happens to have diaphone pipes in its lowest notes. After all, it was the 64-foot *Diaphone* that was deleted from the specifications, not the *Dulzian*. Indeed, if the Diaphone Profunda stop-keys had never been installed on the console (at that time when the dual-tone arrangements were being considered), the stop probably would be thought of in this way. In organs of more moderate size, diaphone pipes in the bass octave of a 32- or 16-foot stop would be of little interest to the organ fraternity and would go unnoticed by people who were not familiar with the instrument concerned. It is only the fame of the Auditorium organ and the unusual length of the stop that has drawn attention to its diaphone pipes. However, strictly speaking, it should be classed as a reed rank.



Emerson Richards compares the beaters of large and small diaphone pipes.

Hearing is believing, but words can tell the story too

(Editor's Note: This wonderful essay by the renowned Concert Organist, Carlo Curley, was first posted April 2, 1999 on ORGUE-L, a British email subscriber's list for organists, and subsequently in Issue 9 of the GO, and is printed here with permission.)

Dear Learned Ones,

I dare venture that if the ACCH instrument could be heard in its entirety, it would transform the thinking of an entire generation of organ folk in a heartbeat. Only **one** of the eight chambers is operational at present. The new CD so lovingly prepared by its devoted core of admirers provides a salutary lesson for us all. This isn't a wash of contemporary unison dirty-dishwater-dark tone. Nor are the powerful batteries of heavily winded reeds offensive or out-of-place in the slightest - everything included in the vast specification, even those most hirsute of power-house stops, has a part to play in choruses. It is immediately obvious that this is a complete and well-thought-out concert instrument of the highest importance that does considerably more than genuflect daintily to the organ's classical past. It makes its statement with extraordinary conviction, style and elegance.

Senator Richards, driven by an enviable zealotry, was well known as a devoted scholar of the organ and its repertoire. But it may come as a surprise to many that 130 of the 449 ranks are devoted to mixture-work. There are 135 independent eight-foot stops, countless independent mutations, no fewer than twenty-nine 2-rank String Celestes (for lovers of that knee-clutching Atlantic wash of tone), and yes, ten 32' stops and the obligatory 64' reed (yawn!). (Why does a dog wash like that? Because it can...).

A tour through this job is an eye-opener as the pipe-work is some of the most beautiful imaginable. With such talented contributors as Henry Vincent Willis, Roscoe Evans and Anton Gottfried, not to mention the highly qualified Midmer-Losh staff, could the result be anything other than glorious?

The brief was disarmingly simple. Provide an instrument that could satisfy



41,000 souls singing the National Anthem with gusto, while being fully capable of playing **all** the organ literature as well as being suitable for transcription, improvisation and light performance. Easy!

I was fortunate to know and study with Robert Elmore, who recorded the unfortunately-titled album 'Bach on the Biggest' on this instrument (Gosh! If I had made this album, it could have been called 'Bach on the Biggest... BY the Biggest'). While I knew him in the early seventies I will never forget his comments about this mega-organ. He, of course, knew it well when all was operational. He said it could "move men's souls as no other organ anywhere". He was a quiet, reflective gentleman not given to over-statement in the slightest, who was an immensely talented performer of the highest calibre.

Last autumn when the new demonstration ACCH-CD was made, J.L. Coignet (of City of Paris and Casavant fame) visited and toured through the instrument.

(His comprehensive article about this organ appears in April's 'ISO Journal'... doubtless to be torn to ribbons later in 'Choir and Organ'). When we spoke several weeks ago he was enthralled ("over the moon") by what he had heard and enthused as I've never heard him about any organ. Phrases like:

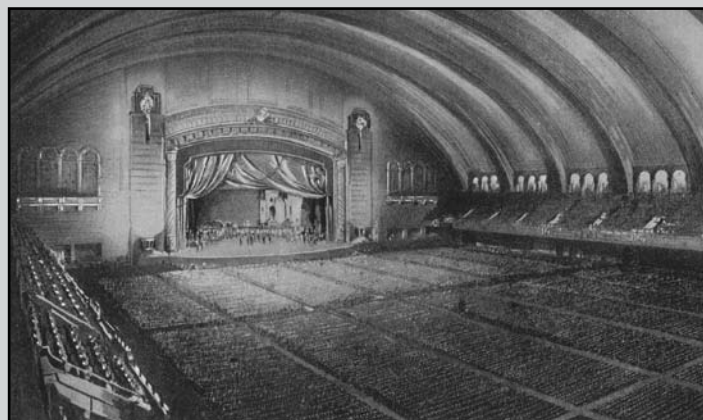
"Unbelievable... quite an adventure for an organ-builder to see such a monument to our art first-hand ... one can hardly imagine the effect when all is restored and working perfectly..."

I wish to recommend this recording to all as it provides a clear-cut snapshot of the nobility and clear, singing tone which most organists would never suspect could issue from the chamber(s). Among the most impressive tracks is the simple hymn 'Abide With Me' (Eventide), played by a man who just happened to gain entrance to the hall during the sessions, visiting the city for a convention in another venue. With flight-deck assistants aplenty, he played the verses of this hymn and to hear the instrument's inimitable crescendo is to experience life in this business afresh. The Head Porter here at the Abbey of the Mauve Thought was forced to rush sweating from the room to refresh his beer-glass after the last great chord died away, swearing that it was the most thrilling sound he had ever heard.

If the ACCH Committee's recent Press releases seem over the top, remember that this band of devoted souls are working with all their good force to 'move mountains'. In this sound-bitten age, they are spot-on to highlight the points which will appeal to the public who will fund this behemoth's revival. I cannot begin to fathom how many organists' cash contributions motivated by their love for the 'Mounted (or Dis-Mounted) Cornet' would be required to restore this job to its former unsurpassed glory. It calls for



This early aerial view of the Convention Hall clearly shows the enormity of this gigantic structure. Actually, an artist's rendering of the building was superimposed over the arial view to create this composite image.



Early pre-construction renderings of the interior and exterior of the Hall.

a ground-swell of affection from music-lovers not bound to any particular school of thought.

Emerson Richards, could have perhaps gleaned solace from the words of Lord Thorneycroft, who wrote in 'The Sunday Telegraph' on 11th February, 1979: "Some men go through life absolutely miserable because, despite the most enormous achievements, they just didn't do one thing - like the architect who didn't build St. Paul's. I didn't quite

build St. Paul's, but I stood on more mountain tops than possibly I deserved." Richards certainly "stood on... mountain tops", leaving us an incredible, stunning legacy that, if left 'hanging in rags' to rot in situ would constitute the most flagrant and unconscionable violation of an international and highly-artistic monument known in this precious field for centuries. Only a simplistic, philistine nincompoop would term this glorious instrument 'not worth saving'.

(As this instrument was built all at once as a single entity, I wonder, were it located in Britain, would it qualify for Lottery funding? I can hear the objections even as I write these words!)

Heed the call, folks. This dear organ needs to be restored ... and soon.

*Yours sincerely,
Carlo Curley
London
April 1, 1999*

we get mail

Dear ACCHOS;

I'm Walter Elliott, correspondent for "Area Auto Racing News," of Trenton, and "National Speed Sport News," now of Harrisburg, N.C.

Can you help me confirm whether a midget auto-racing car damaged the organ during an indoor race in the late 1930s? I was interviewing Chris Economaki, NSSN publisher emeritus and editor, who told me the story. Chris said the accident nearly stopped any future auto racing in the ACCC/Boardwalk Hall because of the expense of repairs.

I'm not one to doubt Mr. Economaki's word - he's forgotten more about auto racing than most journalists and historians can remember.

Still, I've no word on the year or date other than late 1930s, nor who was the driver or what the driver drove. Perhaps there are "The Press of Atlantic City" clippings or repair bills.

Any help will be most appreciated; I'll follow up with what I can find from my end.

Sincerely,
Walter Elliott

STEPHEN SMITH REPLIES

Dear Mr. Elliott,

Many thanks for your interesting message.

I have to say that the possibility of a midget auto crashing into the organ in the Atlantic City Convention Hall (now Boardwalk Hall) sounds unlikely, in my opinion. Certainly it is not a tale I have heard before (and I've heard *many* about that instrument).

This is because the only part of the organ that is on show (i.e. not hidden behind grilles about 40 feet or more off ground level) are the consoles (i.e. where the organist sits and plays). There are two consoles; one fixed and one portable. Both resided on (opposite sides, usually, of) the hall's stage which is some 5 feet or so higher than the main floor. My understanding of the arrangement of the hall for auto racing is that the vehicles were confined to the main floor, which they simply drove on to from outside the building. It seems unlikely that a vehicle would be able to mount the stage.

However, the story may have some truth in it somewhere-or-other. Perhaps parts of two autos involved in a smash landed on the stage/organ console(s)? Like so many of the tales concerning the world's largest pipe organ, the details seem to have been lost in the mists of time!

With best wishes,
Stephen D. Smith
President - www.acchos.org

Gentlemen,

I just finished reading Part Two of Stephen D. Smith's article, "Five Days in Six Chambers," where he says his figures of the total pipe count are "...the most accurate to ever appear in print, I stand by them."

In September of 1995, a week before the Annual Miss

America Pageant, Curator Dennis McGurk was kind enough to give me a private tour. During our time together, Dennis mentioned that he had done a count himself on three separate occasions. Twice it came out to 33,112, and one was 33,114!!! Not bad for an educated guess. Congratulations, Stephen.

Keith Bigger, Organ Curator
The New Baptist Temple, Brooklyn, NY

Dear Keith,

Many thanks for your message.

I actually put a great deal of thought and much time into attempting to determine an accurate pipe number for the ACCH M-L organ. Sad but true!

I guess that, in the scheme of things, the actual number is not that important. I don't think anyone disputes that it has more pipes than the Wanamaker organ (28,582; I believe). It's just a case of how many more!

I'm prepared to accept that my calculations may be wrong, up to about 1,000 pipes. However, if my margin of error is greater than that, I'll be most surprised. I have to say, though, that I think my figure is likely to be wrong by dozens, rather than hundreds.

Between you and me... You can add a couple of extra pipes to the total, making it 33,116. After publication of the book, I discovered that the Echo organ's Violone Celeste went down two notes lower than specified in the contract. And, if you want to add-in (a) the 13 flue pipes provided for tuning the reed section of the Great-Solo, plus (b) the single 16-foot tuning pipe that's up with the Fanfare's Trombone in the roof, that takes the total to 33,130!

With best wishes,
Stephen D. Smith
President - www.acchos.org
Webmaster - www.organrecitals.com

Dear Mr. Smith:

I recently received the latest *Grand Ophicleide* and enjoyed the write up on Dennis [McGurk]. (He gave us a tour of the big organ a number of years ago.) I believe that the unidentified gentleman shown seated with him at the console was the late TV humorist Herb Shriner (pictured lower right), who was noted for his harmonica playing. In the late 50's or early 60's he bought the 3/14 Wurlitzer from the Chicago Arena and installed it in his house. He was quoted, "All my life I wanted a harmonica I could sit down to, and now I've got it."

Keep up the good work.
Sincerely,
Dick Auchincloss



[This following was sent to us by a friend of the organ]

Letter to the Editor: The Current

Seth Grossman has it wrong again.

Yes we should save the Convention Hall Organ, and it's okay to use government money to do this; after all the government is the main blame for the organ's deteriorated condition.

Seth finds it easy to criticize and find fault just about everywhere he looks, and loves to dwell on it. How about saying something positive once in a while? Now it's my turn Seth, move over, you're not the only one around who can think or speak. I'm going to remind you who is really at fault here.

I too, when a child, heard the organ play and will never forget it. Somewhere along the way Atlantic City was allowed to deteriorate and huge sections were torn down. Hotels and motels, theaters, business, stores, and the convention hall deteriorated and some things disappeared. Then we waited for the right time for casino gambling to come along and rescue us. Remember how the first casinos boarded up their Boardwalk side to keep its patrons inside? This didn't last too long, but it had an effect. The Boardwalk was allowed to deteriorate too.

Finally the New Jersey Sports and Exposition Authority came along and joined in to help rescue us. They refurbished the Convention Hall and made it beautiful once again. All the while, and at the same time the refurbishing was going on, they allowed the pipe organ to continue to decay. In fact the

hall reconstruction did more to harm our wonderful pipe organ than all the citywide neglect had done before. The Authority allowed water, dampness, vandalism, and careless persons in and around the pipes and mechanisms that made it work. And guess what? It didn't work any more.

Then caring citizens stepped in to restore a one-of-a-kind organ. They raised money and fought to be allowed access to the organ. And in the last few years they made headway, planning to repair things that never should have been broken.

Now others have stepped forward to finish the restoration, including our Congressman who many times works quietly to accomplish great things. They should be thanked, not whined about.

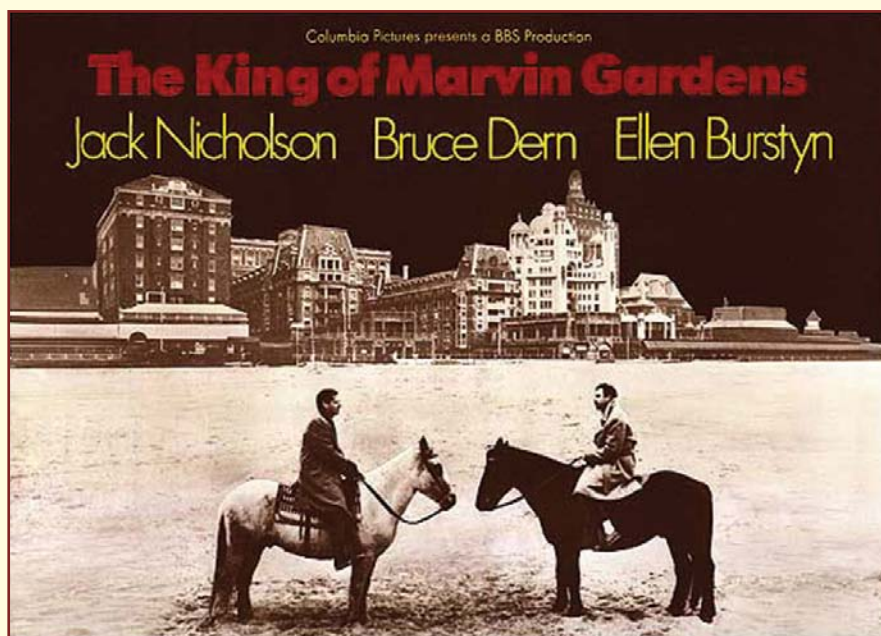
And because various agencies of government allowed this to happen, they should be the ones to fix things. Of course I know that we are the government and it is our money, but so what? We should learn from our mistakes, and keep better watch and control over government agencies, not tear everything down they help destroy.

We'll never have our old Atlantic City again, but saving some of the very best from the past is our future. Casinos: Hands off the old Convention Hall and hands off the "Largest Pipe Organ in the World."

John Dilks
Egg Harbor Twp., NJ

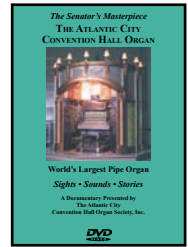
The King of Marvin Gardens

The 1972 film, *The King of Marvin Gardens*, starring Jack Nicholson, has been released on DVD. Portions of the film were done in Atlantic City. Scene 15 was shot in Boardwalk Hall with two brief flashes of the 7-manual console being played. The first part of the scene has a Hammond organ on the soundtrack with playing simulated on the big console. The end of the scene has the actual Midmer-Losh being played briefly. It is worth a rental to catch this rare scene along with images of Atlantic City in the early '70s.



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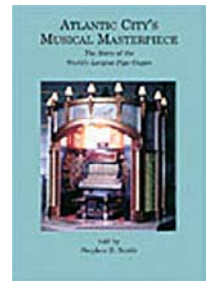
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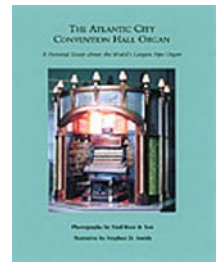
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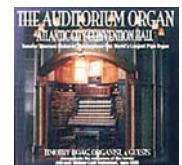
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