At the AOI – Fall 2009

American Organ Institute Gala Events (for more information, visit http://aoi.ou.edu/gala)

Thursday, Oct. 1
8 p.m., Sharp Concert Hall. OU Wind Symphony and Symphony Band with the Möller Municipal Organ

Friday, Oct. 2
2:30-4 p.m., AOI Shop. Behind-the-Scenes Open House: Tours of the AOI Shop led by student organists (no admission charge)
6 p.m., Sharp Concert Hall Stage. Gala On-Stage Reception
8 p.m., Sharp Concert Hall. Kaleidoscope Concert, Peter Richard Conte, guest organ soloist

Saturday, Oct. 3
10:30 a.m., Sharp Concert Hall. “Peter and the Wolf” and other favorites, R. Jelani Eddington, guest organ soloist (no admission charge)
2 p.m., Sharp Concert Hall. Divine Reflections: Choral Masterworks, featuring University of Oklahoma choirs, John Schwandt and American Organ Institute students
6 p.m., Gothic Hall. Grand Salute to a Grand Lady, Donald Dumler, guest organ soloist
8 p.m., Sharp Concert Hall. Be Silent No More! Silent Movie Metropolis featuring Clark Wilson, guest organ soloist

Sunday, Oct. 4
10:30 a.m.-noon, AOI Shop. Behind-the-Scenes Open House: Tours of the AOI Shop led by student organists (no admission charge)
1:30 p.m., Pitman Hall. Unwinding a Magnum: Moving the Mighty Möller, lecture and presentation by John Bishop (no admission charge)
3 p.m., Sharp Concert Hall. All Star Blockbuster, featuring the Möller Municipal Organ, R. Jelani Eddington, John Schwandt and Clark Wilson, organ; Jeongwon Han, piano; and special appearance by OU Jazz Ensemble members
8 p.m. Friday, Dec. 11, Sharp Concert Hall. Holiday Pipes Concert featuring Professor John Schwandt, organ

Ticket information and accommodations on the basis of disability are available by calling the Weitzenhoffer Family College of Fine Arts Box Office at (405) 325-4101.
Piping in ...

This past summer I had the opportunity to work for the Friends of the Wanamaker Organ in Philadelphia. I was involved with several of their ongoing projects and gained valuable skills in the process. I learned the most, however, from helping to voice the pipes of the Wanamaker Organ Orchestral division.

This division has several ranks of flue pipes that are being voiced in the Friends’ shop. Peter Batchelder, an eminent pipe voicer, is responsible for the tonal finishing of the division. I assisted him in his work by prepping pipes, which he would then finish. From this work, I saw how involved voicing really is and discovered how many various elements come together to make a pipe sound.

The voicing process itself is quite laborious. We had to take the immense space in which the Wanamaker Organ is located into account. To ensure that every pipe sounds right in the room, we took a few pipes from each set to the Orchestral chamber and voiced them there so we could use them as samples to follow later. Then we put the set on the voicing machine and voiced each pipe. After going over the entire rank, we took the pipes back to the pipe chamber and regulated the volume of each pipe while listening from various places in the room.

Now that I am back at the University of Oklahoma for the fall semester, I will be able to apply the knowledge I gained over the summer to the many exciting projects the AOI is undertaking. By combining my unique training in organ technology at OU with summer work at other locations, I have been able to strengthen the knowledge and skills acquired at OU. This combination of practical and theoretical understanding will be the foundation of my continuing work in the field of organ building.

— Brennan Ebeling

Brennan Ebeling, a native of the Philadelphia area, is starting his sophomore year this fall. He is pursuing a double major with Bachelor of Musical Arts in organ technology and Bachelor of Music in organ Performance degrees

Final note: In exchange for the acquisition of the perforator, rolls and other equipment, Professor Schwandt will be providing silent movie accompaniment of the 1923 Lon Cheney classic The Hunchback of Notre Dame at the Music House Museum. If you are near Traverse City on Oct. 10, check out one of the showings with John Schwandt at the Wurlitzer organ. More info on tickets and location on the MHM web site musichouse.org

OU Combined Choirs perform a rousing chorus of “Oklahoma” accompanied by John Schwandt to close their April 2009 concert.

Technical Corner

The University of Oklahoma American Organ Institute has acquired another priceless treasure: the original Möller perforator and all known extant master rolls. First purchased from M. P. Möller Pipe Organ Company in the 1980s by James Weisenborne, they were later donated to the Music House Museum in Acme, Mich. The AOI recently negotiated with the museum to acquire these treasures.

The perforator, pictured left, converts the 26-1/2” wide master rolls into the standard 11-1/4” wide performance rolls. In early June 2009, Drew Mangus, Dan Sliger, Jeremy Wance and I made the trek to northern Michigan. We packed up the rolls and equipment over three days. The weight of the rolls and equipment required splitting the load into three separate 26’ trucks. Many hands (and muscles) sped up the unloading of the master rolls, which weigh between 20 and 100 pounds each. Helping the four of us were Bob Wilhelm, Frank Wu, Craig Sproat, John Schwandt, Bob Shull and Bradley Fitch.

In the last picture, Jeremy Wance, left, catalogs the numbered rolls before passing them up to Dan Sliger, right. Master rolls, perforator, player rolls and other equipment will be just one of the many items on display at the AOI shop during the “Old Wine, New Bottles” gala.

— John Riester, AOI Shop Manager

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