

*Journal of the
American Musical
Instrument Society*

VOLUME X • 1984



Copyright by the [American Musical Instrument Society](#).
Content may be used in accordance with the principles of fair
use under [Section 107 of the United States Copyright Act](#).
Content may not be reproduced for commercial purposes.

tory lists at Verona, this trombone is of more fanciful design than its more austere German counterparts; the oriental qualities in its outline remind one of the phantasmagoric instruments for staged *intermedii* and *trionfi* seen in contemporary paintings by Filippo Lippi and Lorenzo Costa. Somewhat disturbing is an apparently missing cross-stay on the slide, emphasizing the need for responsible restoration of this lovely instrument.

What is the purpose of a catalogue of this type? Since the Verona collection is not an exhibition and, by its very nature, is not really suited for inspection by the general public, this is not intended as a guidebook in the visual sense. Neither can the work serve as a guide to those who might desire to copy an instrument, since measurements are wisely limited to general dimensions such as overall length, sounding length, and diameters at some point (makers prefer to take their own measurements and require innumerable ones, placed and spaced according to individual needs). I think the purpose of this catalogue is to satisfy Veronese pride; there is a feeling that when a thing is more than three hundred years old, it deserves suitable recognition. One can sense this throughout the volume. The Philharmonic Society even commissioned two authors among the very best in the field, irrespective of national boundaries, to undertake the work. The cost of the volume was underwritten for the Philharmonic Society by the Savings Bank of Verona, Vicenza, and Belluna, which remains totally modest about its role. The Veronese feel that their small but wonderful collection deserves a modern catalogue, and rightly so. What about the many large public instrument collections in the United States, none of which have a modern catalogue of their holdings? It's all a matter of how proud you are of what you have.

R. M. ROSENBAUM

John Fesperman. *Flentrop in America: An Account of the Work and Influence of the Dutch Organ Builder D. A. Flentrop in the United States, 1939–1977.* Foreword by Fenner Douglass. Raleigh, N.C.: Sunbury Press, 1982. xv, 114 pp.; 1 color, 39 black-and-white plates. \$33.00.

Histories of contemporary instrument makers are as important as histories of makers of earlier times. While they may lack some of the perspective and objectivity of the latter, they can, if well researched and documented, provide an overview of a maker's development, work, and influence that will be of value to both contemporary readers and future historians.

John Fesperman's *Flentrop in America* is such a history, with an interest-

ing twist. For a full account of the Flentrop Orgelbouw of Zaandam, Holland, one must consult Jan Jongepier's *75 Jaar Flentrop Orgelbouw* (Raleigh, N.C.: Sunbury Press, 1978), but Fesperman's book expands on a particular facet of the Flentrop firm's career, dealing specifically with the organs built under the direction of Dirk Andries Flentrop for export to the United States between 1954 and 1977.

The period dealt with is significant in the overall history of the American organ in the twentieth century. Prior to World War II, a movement away from the orchestrally imitative tonal ideals of such builders as Skinner and Kimball had begun under the stimulus of a group of forward-looking organists that included E. Power Biggs, Carl Weinrich, and Melville Smith. Leading this new wave of tonal reform were builders G. Donald Harrison and Walter Holtkamp, but until the 1950s the chief thrust of their efforts had been the grafting of classical tonal concepts onto an unaltered twentieth-century mechanical chassis. After the war, many American organists (including Fesperman) studied in Europe on Fulbright grants and discovered that some of the most avant-garde European organ builders had gone the further step of adopting classical forms of action, windchests, and free-standing cases. The American students (and touring organists such as Biggs) could not escape the fact that new organs built along these lines were musically more convincing than their American counterparts.

As the major American builders were not yet prepared to go further in their reform (a few smaller ones were beginning to think in that direction), and as monetary exchange rates were at the time very favorable to importation, organists convinced that more than a tonal bow in the direction of classic ideals was necessary inevitably turned in the direction of imported instruments. The rest, as they say, is history; and a large chunk of that history is contained in Fesperman's volume.

Many foreign firms, most of them Dutch, German, and Austrian, exported organs to American churches, colleges, and homes in the period under study; but, with the possible exception of von Beckerath of Hamburg, few had the influence of the Flentrop firm. Fesperman chronicles that influence from several different angles, and in so doing provides excellent illumination on the larger picture.

One of his means of achieving this is the frequent use of direct quotes, many of them from articles, letters, and interviews with D. A. Flentrop himself, plus others from some of the Americans who were closely associated with Flentrop throughout the period under study, notably E. Power Biggs, Fenner Douglass, and the organ builder Charles Fisk. Fesperman also discusses in detail some of Flentrop's more influential American in-

struments, such as those in the Busch-Reisinger Museum, Cambridge (1958), St. Mark's Cathedral, Seattle (1965), and Duke University (1976), with an emphasis on their design and their place in the overall development of Flentrop's tonal and mechanical principles.

The book abounds in reference and support material: specifications of fifteen representative organs; forty plates (one fine color frontispiece and the rest black-and-white, the latter unfortunately somewhat lacking in contrast and sharpness) that include some drawings from the Flentrop files; a list of all Flentrop organs exported to the United States; a "Selective Discography" (which might have been a bit more extensive than it is); biographical notes; and a good bibliography.

All in all, we are given in this book a good three-dimensional picture of an organ builder who, both personally and through his work, exerted an unquestioned influence on the American organ of the 1950s, '60s, and '70s—an influence still being felt (if perhaps less strongly) in the 1980's. It is a book that is required reading for anyone seriously interested in the contemporary American organ and the forces that shaped it. Quite aside from this, it is also a very readable account dealing with an important period in American musical history.

BARBARA OWEN

Phillip T. Young. *Twenty-five Hundred Historical Woodwind Instruments: An Inventory of the Major Collections.* New York: Pendragon Press, 1982. xii, 155 pp.; 13 black-and-white plates. \$45.

It is our great good fortune that Phillip Young has shared his abundant research with us by way of his *Twenty-five Hundred Woodwind Instruments*. A compilation of materials collected over a twenty-year period, the book is an excellent inventory of known surviving instruments by 122 important makers, and a great deal of information has been packed into it.

Young has chosen to present his data in vertical columns, a form that I find easy to use. The clearly organized information readily presents itself at a glance. Each maker's inventory is listed under his name; the makers are presented in alphabetical order in the body of the text. The data given include the number of keys, materials of which the instruments are made, pitch (often the museum's judgment), the number of sections, the shape of the flaps (keys), miscellaneous significant details (often given in footnotes), and sources of illustrations. Young gives the overall length of the instrument where it is known; the actual length of the air column was not practi-