

*Journal of the
American Musical
Instrument Society*

VOLUME XXXIII • 2007



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.

Swedish makers at the Boston workshop of the Vega company who made beautifully crafted Giuseppe Pettine model mandolins with broad fingerboards and semi-vaulted backs.

JAMES TYLER

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

John Ogasapian, Scot L. Huntington, Len Levasseur, and N. Lee Orr, editors. *Litterae Organi: Essays in Honor of Barbara Owen*. Richmond, VA: OHS Press, 2005. xxi, 388 pp.: 60 black-and-white photographs. ISBN: 0-913499-22-6. \$55.00 (hardcover).

Barbara Owen has enjoyed a long and diversified career as an organ performer, builder, and historian. She has traveled widely in North America and in Europe studying organs and building techniques, and has investigated and reported on many unknown instruments. She also worked for eighteen years in the workshop of the C. B. Fisk organ-building firm.

The nature and range of the contributions in this *Festschrift* amply reflect the breadth of Owens's own work. Included are several essays on historical aspects of the world of organs: John L. Speller's "Aspects of the Old English Transposing Organ"; Nicholas Thistlethwaite's "Organs and Arminians in Seventeenth-Century Cambridge"; and N. Lee Orr's "Dudley Buck and the Coming of Age of the American Organ." Several essays deal with discovering and restoring organs. Dana J. Hull's "Organ Restoration Odyssey" relates her adventures (and occasional *misadventures*) as an organist and music librarian turned pipe-organ rescuer and restorer. Laurence Libin describes an instrument in Pavlovsk, the St. Petersburg palace of Paul I, in "Johann Gaborahn's Organized Piano in Context." "Oaxaca's Amazing Organ Culture" by Susan Tattershall is a tale of the discovery and subsequent restoration of an organ in Mexico. Stephen L. Pinel's research, encouraged by Owen, on a little-known American builder is reported in "Giles Beach and the American Church Organ Works." Rounding out the collection are essays devoted to specific aspects of performance: for example, Peter Williams's analytical consideration of music by Frescobaldi, J. S. Bach, and Domenico Scarlatti, and Lynn Edwards Butler's essay, "Manual Designations as Registration Indicators."

Other essays give welcome attention to subjects not often addressed. Jonathan Ambrosino evaluates several instances of organ builders returning to alter their own work in "Winds of Change," a far-ranging look

at the work and re-work of Ernest M. Skinner, G. Donald Harrison, Charles Fisk, John Brombaugh, and Bruce Fowkes. Uwe Pape discusses techniques and principles for the restoration of the neglected pneumatic instruments of the last century in "Restoration of Tubular-Pneumatic Organs in Northern Germany." In "The Bad Tempered Organ," Stephen Bicknell tells of his adventures in the tricky world of temperament, particularly with respect to music for organ and voices.

This is a handsome book, lavishly and richly illustrated, but the glossy paper that well suits the photographs makes the print difficult to read. Editing is somewhat uneven; one wonders if it was left to the individual authors. On page 370, "facit" should be "facet." Tatershall's fascinating—yes, exciting—tale of resurrecting a beautiful lifeless organ in Oaxaca is marred by infelicities that detract from the reader's pleasure: "a four-foot open principals" (p. 98), "There exists . . . two organs," and "the projects completion" (p. 99). In addition, this essay has an informal, often anecdotal quality that hints at not-quite-adequate conversion from an oral presentation.

On the positive side, the essays are so varied in subject matter and approach that almost every reader will find a topic of interest, whether it is the sad life of the unappreciated Eugene Thayer, the work of Dudley Buck, the earliest recordings of American organs, or Manuel Rosales's work as an organ-builder in Los Angeles. With its broad spectrum of material, this volume is a welcome addition to the literature about the organ, its history, its music, and its vicissitudes as a musical instrument uniquely subjected to the requirements of collective—i.e., congregational—taste. *Litterae organi* forms a fine and lasting tribute to the manifold achievements of Barbara Owen.

ISABELLE EMERSON

UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA, LAS VEGAS

John R. Watson, editor. *Organ Restoration Reconsidered: Proceedings of a Colloquium*. Detroit Monographs in Musicology/Studies in Music, no. 44. Warren, MI: Harmonie Park Press, 2005. xix, 176 pp.: 58 black-and-white photographs, 6 figures, 6 musical exx., 9 tables. ISBN: 0-89990-128-X. \$35.00 (paper).

The colloquium of the title took place in 1999, hosted by Historic St. Luke's Church in Smithfield, Virginia. Thirty-four specialists—from England, Canada, the Netherlands, Sweden, Scotland, Australia, and the