

*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.

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

United States—were invited to participate in this gathering, titled “Historic Organs Reconsidered: Restoration and Conservation for a New Century.” From the nature and quality of the thirteen papers presented, we can only regret that the lively discussions that must have followed each reading are not also included in the published proceedings.

Following a helpful introduction, which summarizes the contents, are four sections: “Conservation and Restoration in Context”; “Conservation and Organs”; “The Historic St. Luke’s Organ: A Case Study”; and “European and American Case Studies.” The issues and problems of organ restoration are surveyed in the first part. Laurence Libin’s clear and incisive essay lays out the broad arguments for conservation versus restoration before moving to his recommendations for the object at hand: Historic St. Luke’s organ. This English chamber organ, dating from 1630, arrived in Smithfield in 1957, coming almost directly from the English manor house of the LeStrange family, for whom it seems to have been built. The following three papers discuss conservation and restoration in terms of techniques: What is to be learned from building techniques of the seventeenth century? (This essay includes a discussion of historical fidelity versus pursuit of musical qualities.) What is the value of using the instrument as a model to copy? Can restoration in fact negate the value of the original? In the latter paper, R. L. Barclay relates the amusing but sad tale of Glenn Gould’s favorite Steinway, which was returned by Ottawa restorer Kenneth Lauzon to its full beauty of appearance and of sound, but in the process lost almost all resemblance to the instrument Gould had so loved.

Part II consists of an overview by David Blanchfield of techniques used to clean and restore organs and a description by David Goist of cleaning and preserving the painted surfaces of the St. Luke’s organ. Both papers, though readily understandable by the non-specialist, will provide information of value to other technicians.

Part III centers on the organ at Historic St. Luke’s. Barbara Owen provides a biography of the instrument, together with an insightful discussion of its prospects—restoration to its original state or preservation in its present condition. Owen makes a good case for the second in this interesting and well-written account. The essay by Christopher Kent attempts to establish the instrument’s original voicing and temperament by examining the chamber music in which it was presumably used. Much of this repertoire for violins or viols plus basses was by John Jenkins (1592–1678), who was resident in the LeStrange house from 1644 to

1660. The final essay in this section, by Dominic Gwynn, investigates the context of the instrument, i.e., chamber organs used in the decades before and after 1630 (when the organ was bought for the LeStrange family), providing tables of stops, key compasses, and pitch, and discussing the organ's role in string chamber ensembles.

Having moved from the general to the specific in Parts I to III, we return in Part IV to the more general: the consideration of other historic organs. George Taylor and Bruce Shull relate the dramatic history of the Salem Tannenberg organ. The passion of these authors—revealed in such colorful language as “resurrecting,” “forlorn heap of parts,” and “an execrable modern wind system”—is positively endearing, and prepares us for their statement that “the organ fairly begged to be saved” (p. 126). Their love for their craft and its subjects resonates in their description of the sound of the pre-Silbermann Saxon instruments: “these organs express the pietistic musical ideal of *Lieblichkeit*, or loveliness and sweetness, qualities so desperately lacking in our society today” (p. 134). They are enthusiastic about the didactic value of studying these instruments: “Through our privileged interaction with instruments from periods more aesthetically astute than our own, we have found the organs themselves to be the real teachers who continually surprise us by expanding our horizons” (p. 135).

Essays by Raymond Brunner and Göran Grahn give further case studies of restoring organs in Pennsylvania and the Baltic, respectively. Brunner relates hair-raising stories of well-intentioned efforts at bringing organs into line with “modern” aesthetics, and in the course of it mixing up principal ranks, installing pipes anywhere they could be made to fit, raising pitch, changing stop action, wind pressure, etc. He summarizes his own principles: preserve as much original material as possible; avoid what he terms “nonreversible procedures”; do too little, rather than too much (p. 145).

Grahn presents an interesting account of the organ situation in the Baltic countries at the end of the twentieth century. Churches that had been used as factories or for other non-religious purposes during the Soviet years are once again functioning as originally intended. The organs, which, fortunately, were often left alone, are now in demand for religious services. The author gives us an example of an instrument in Edole built by Christoph Wilhelm Braveleit in 1784, “romanticized” around 1852 (but without irrevocably eliminating the original materials), and again rebuilt in 1902. Would it be best to restore this organ to

its original state or to preserve the altered instrument? Since the basic instrument is still viable, his recommendation is to preserve as much as possible of the Braveleit material, and he defines the steps to be taken.

A second instrument, in Kihelkonna, Estonia, was built in 1805 by Johann Andreas Stein (1752–after 1821). Stein, not to be confused with Mozart's Johann Andreas Stein (1728–1792) in Augsburg, had apprenticed in Thuringia with Heinrich Andreas Contius (1708–1792). Around the middle of the century both Stein and Contius (now Stein's father-in-law) moved to the Baltic region. After Contius's death Stein established his workshop in Pärnu (Estonia). The Kihelkonna instrument was rebuilt in 1890, at which time a second manual was added, a new console provided, and the pipework rearranged. The recommendation in this case is to preserve the 1890 changes, which were professionally and well done, on two grounds. First, the congregation would not have liked to return to the original one-manual instrument. Second, there is extant no console by either Stein or Contius, so no specific model is available. The two stories neatly illustrate the conflict of the museum principle of restoring and playing infrequently or not at all, with the church's pragmatic need for an instrument to be used regularly.

This section and the book conclude with Darcy Kuronen's description of an organized piano dating from 1828–29, now in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. The instrument, by Alpheus Babcock, was never used in a church and was thus not altered to please congregational tastes. It did, however, suffer damage from improper storage—probably in a barn, since evidence of rodent infestation abounds. The recommendation in this case is not to restore the instrument to playing condition (although the casework will be cleaned to make it an effective exhibit in the MFA collection), but rather to use it as a model from which a copy may be built. Thus the original Babcock instrument will be preserved for all that it can teach us today about the art of the past.

What emerges from all the essays is a sense of the importance of treating each case in an individual way, of the need to assess each example in all possible contexts instead of making categorical statements. Barclay says it well: "Each historic instrument must be allowed to dictate its own future, unencumbered by misinterpretations and rigid stances." He calls for an end to the battles between "conservation and restoration at opposite poles of an imaginary spectrum" (p. 48).

Illustrations are numerous and well-reproduced, and add appropriately to the content of the essays, which are themselves of uniformly high

quality: well-written, informative, and thought-provoking. In sum, this collection has the highly desirable result of awakening in the reader a feeling of loss at not having taken part in the original colloquium. We can be grateful therefore to have the studies available in print.

ISABELLE EMERSON

UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA, LAS VEGAS

Monika Lustig, ed. *Geschichte, Bauweise und Spieltechnik der tiefen Streichinstrumente: 21. Musikinstrumentenbau-Symposium Michaelstein, 17. bis 19. November 2000. Michaelsteiner Konferenzberichte 64. Blankenburg am Harz: Stiftung Kloster Michaelstein, 2004; Döbel: Janos Stekovics, 2004. 228 pp.: 91 black-and-white illus., 33 figures, 6 musical exx., 4 tables. ISBN: 3-89512-123-1, 3-89923-058-2. €29,80 (hardcover).*

So much of what we know or wish we knew about historical bass instruments depends on the interpretation of terminology that varied greatly over time and place. Confusion arises from the fact that terms still (or again) in use do not necessarily correlate with one specific historic use. Contrary to modern practice, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries it was common to use *basso*, *basse*, *bass*, or even *base* to indicate the musical function of an instrument without regard for its specific organological identity. For example, in many sets of sonatas for *violoncello* and *basso* it is clear from the music that both parts would have been played by what is organologically the same instrument, but the two words differentiate between the soloistic and accompanimental characters of the two parts. The double stops and chords in the bass part of sonatas often show that the part is conceived for the violoncello; an example can be found in the first movement of Salvatore Lanzetti's Sonata in C major, op. 1, no. 4, from his *XII Sonate à violoncello solo e basso continuo* (Amsterdam, 1736). Any meaningful discussion of historical bowed basses must take great pains to be clear in its use of terminology and in its interpretation of the terms used in historical sources.

Monika Lustig points out in her foreword to this volume that the bass instruments of the bowed string family, despite their greater size and diversity, have been the victims of a relative state of scholarly neglect when compared with their smaller cousins, the violins. The twenty-first Michaelstein symposium on musical instrument construction, which gathered an impressive array of prominent scholars and performers for four days in November 2000, was a laudable beginning to redressing this