

THE BUILDER, THE DONOR, AND OTHER PARTICIPANTS

Paul Fritts and Co., of Tacoma, Washington, has built tracker action organs for such institutions as St. Alphonsus Church in Seattle, Arizona State University in Tempe, University of Puget Sound, Princeton Theological Seminary, and Pacific Lutheran University. The company's founder, Paul Fritts, actually studied the violin. But as a young person, he worked with his father completing organ projects in Washington and Alaska before forming a partnership with Ralph Richards. Together they built eight organs between 1986 and 1989. Late in 1989, Fritts reorganized, becoming the sole proprietor of the firm that exists at present. Working with six associates, Paul Fritts has studied organs in the Netherlands, Germany, Spain, and France as the basis for his work.

Glenn D. White of Acoustical and Sound System Design of Seattle, Washington, served as acoustician for the Vassar project. Upon his recommendation, the side walls of the stage were reshaped to fan outward at a slight angle, and the proscenium corners were rounded. Grillwork from the previous organ's screen was applied to the back wall of the auditorium to break up the sound-reflecting surface.

Richard Turlington, of Albis Turlington Architects of New Haven, Connecticut, planned and oversaw the structural modifications of the stage area.

Funding for the new organ was given by the Marian and Speros Martel Foundation, Inc., of Houston, Texas, which also provided support for air conditioning of the auditorium. Mary Anna Fox Martel, a student of music, received from Vassar a Diploma of the School of Music in 1890, during which year she was also president of the Thekla Society. In May 2003, the recital hall in the Belle Skinner Hall of Music will be renamed in her memory. The Martel Foundation, established in 1955, makes grants to support the arts, education, and human services. Ralph S. O'Connor and Karen Ostrum George serve as its president and vice president, respectively. Vassar College is grateful to the Marian and Speros Martel Foundation for its support.

George B. Stauffer, dean of the Mason Gross School of the Arts and professor of music history at Rutgers University, served as organ consultant. The following Vassar faculty participated in the processes of selection and installation: Brian Mann, Merelilyn Gallagher, Rachel Kitzinger, Richard Wilson, Michael Pisani, and Todd Crow. Richard Cox and Karen Quigley were project managers.

THE DEDICATORY RECITALS

Saturday, February 8, 2003, at 8 pm
MERELLYN GALLAGHER

Merelilyn Gallagher is college organist and lecturer in music at Vassar College. She was also organist and choir director at Grace Church in Millbrook, New York, from 1970 through 2002. Her teachers have included Vernon Gotwals, Helmut Walcha, and Heinrich Fleischer. A graduate of Smith College, with a master's degree from University of Minnesota, Ms. Gallagher has served in local AGO chapter positions and was on the faculty for Pipe Organ Encounter 1990 at Duquesne University.

Saturday, February 22, 2003, at 8 pm
JAMES DAVID CHRISTIE

James David Christie received his degrees from Oberlin and New England Conservatories, winning the latter's Distinguished Alumni Award. His teachers have included David Boe, Yuko Hayashi, Marie-Claire Alain, Bernard Lagacé, and Harold Vogel. In 1979 he was the first American to win first prize in the International Organ Competition in Bruges, Belgium. He has served as organist for the Boston Symphony since 1978. He was recently been appointed Professor of organ at Oberlin College and continues as distinguished artist in residence at Holy Cross College.

Saturday, March 29, 2003, at 8 pm
JOAN LIPPINCOTT

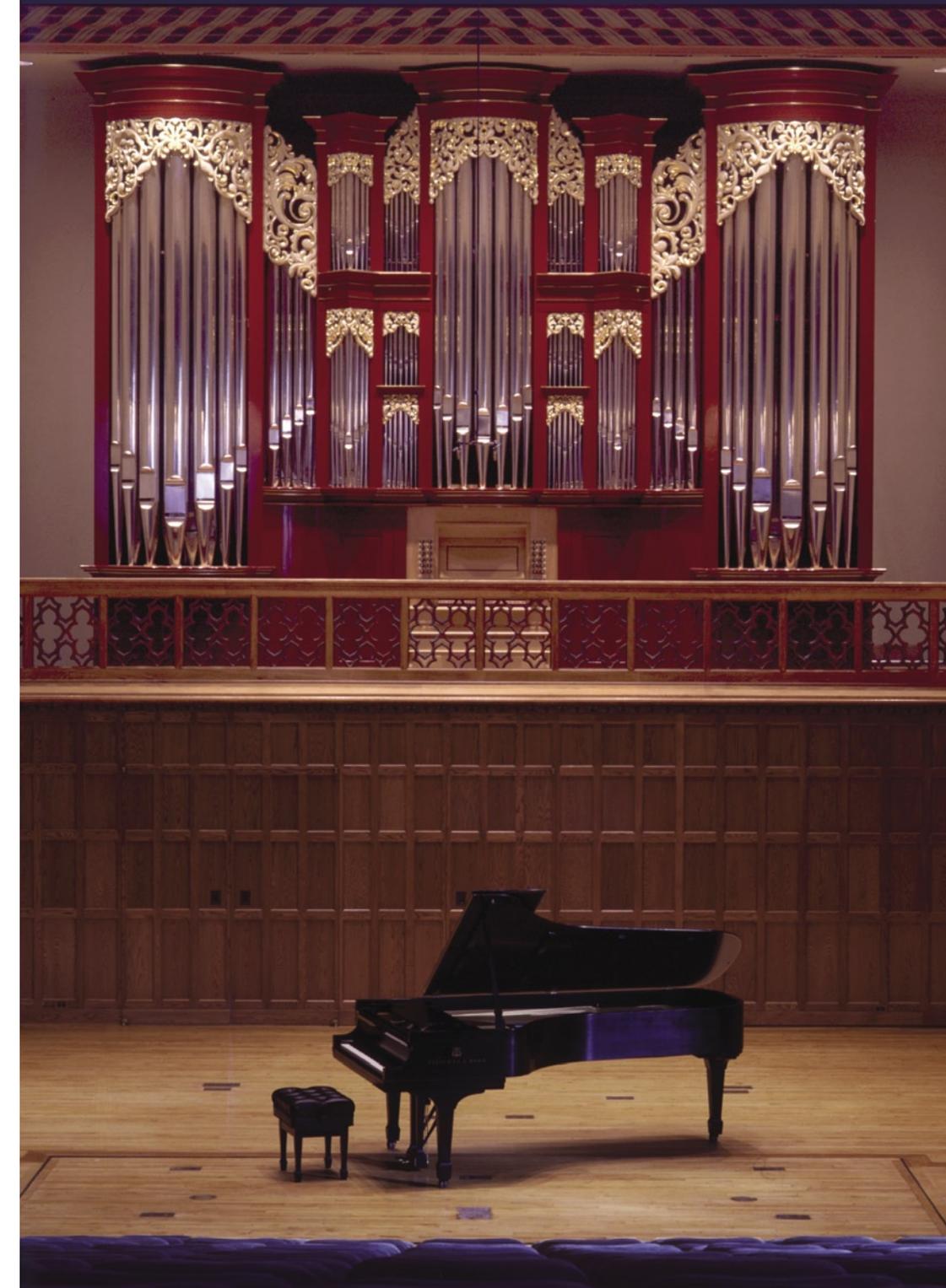
A graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music and Westminster Choir College, Joan Lippincott was principal university organist at Princeton University for seven years. In addition, she served as professor of organ at Westminster Choir College. Her many recordings on the Gothic label include music by Bach, Mozart, Mendelssohn, Widor, Alain, and Pinkham. In 2001-2002, she played eight all-Bach programs on different organs in New York City under the rubric "Bach in the Big Apple."

On May 10, 2003 at 8 pm, members of the Vassar College Department of Music will present a concert on the occasion of the renaming of the recital hall in memory of Mary Anna Fox Martel, who received a Diploma of the School of Music in 1890. The new Paul Fritts organ will be heard as part of that program.

PAUL FRITTS PIPE ORGAN

Opus 23

THE NEW PIPE ORGAN
AT THE BELLE SKINNER HALL OF MUSIC
VASSAR COLLEGE



PIPE ORGANS AT VASSAR

Vassar College has possessed a pipe organ since its opening in 1865. Counting the new Paul Fritts, the college currently has seven such instruments. The largest, built in 1967 by Gress-Miles, resides in the Chapel. It occupies the same space as the original chapel organ of 1904, which allowed for the retention of the hand-carved façade designed by the architects of the Chapel, Shepley, Ruten & Coolidge of Boston. The Gress-Miles organ has four manuals and pedal, 99 stops and 5,710 pipes. It has mainly direct electric action.

Next in size comes the Paul Fritts organ, with two manuals and pedal, 34 stops and 2,418 pipes. It can be pumped by pedal (though it also has an electric blower for everyday use) and possesses mechanical stop and key action ("tracker action"). This means that the keys are connected to the pipe valves mechanically, without pneumatic or electric assistance.

The Fritts organ replaces a 1964 three-manual instrument with 69 stops, about half of which was newly built by the firm Gress-Miles. The other half consisted of revoiced pipework from the original instrument built by Kimball in 1931. This hybrid organ has been acquired by the United States Military Academy at West Point and is installed in the Old Cadet Chapel there.

Thekla Hall, on the fourth floor of Skinner Hall, houses an organ built by Thomas Hall early in the 1820s. It possesses one manual and five stops. This is considered to be one of only two Hall organs in existence. It was restored to playable condition by Susan Tattershall, then of Rhinebeck, NY, in 1994.

In frequent use as an accompanying instrument in the baroque repertoire is the Taylor and Booddy continuo organ made in 1987. This instrument was designed and built by Bruce Shull. It has oak pipes (Gedackt 8' and Blockflöte 4').

The smallest organ in our collection is the Memling Portative, which was fashioned by Phil Levin in 1981 to resemble the instrument frequently depicted by the Flemish painter Hans Memling. It is used in performances of medieval and Renaissance music.

Two practice organs complete the collection: from 1910 by Estey Organ Co. of Brattleboro, Vermont; and from 1964 by Gress-Miles of Princeton, New Jersey. These are located in practice rooms 226 and 126 of Skinner Hall.

SPECIFICATIONS

HAUPTWERK
Principal 16'
Octava 8'
Rohrflöte 8'
Viol di Gamba 8'
Octava 4'
Spitzflöte 4'
Nasat/Cornet II *
Superoctava 2'
Mixture IV-VI
Tierce (Mixture)
Trompet 16'
Trompet 8'

OBERPOSITIV
Geigenprincipal 8'
Gedackt 8'
Quintadena 8'
Octava 4'
Rohrflöte 4'
Octava 2'
Gemshorn 2'
Quinte 1 1/3'
Quint/Sesquialtera II *
Mixture IV-VI
Fagotto 16'
Dulcian 8'

PEDAL
Principal 16'***
Violon 16'
Subbass 16'
Octava 8'***
Bourdon 8'***
Octava 4'
Mixture V-VIII
Posaune 16'
Trompet 8'
Trompet 4'

COUPLERS
Oberpositiv-
Hauptwerk
Hauptwerk-Pedal
Oberpositiv-Pedal

Manuals: 56 notes
(C-g''')

Pedal 30 notes (C-f'),
flat pedal board

Foot pumping option on
wind system
Temperament: Kellner
Pitch: A=440
Tremulant

Tracker playing action
Mechanical stop action

*Double draw
**Bottom octave transmission from
Hauptwerk
***Transmissions from Pedal

