

of the huge zinc pipes, that have now been replaced with tin according to historical models. Also Beckerath's stated intention not to build mere copies of antiques led him in some cases to reject traditional methods of construction such as mechanical stop action in favor of more convenient but faulty modern substitutes, and to replace materials such as wood with plastics which have not proven of lasting value. The forthright correction of these matters posed little difficulty here, for they did not threaten the nature of the organ as a musical instrument. A more serious question arose in treatment the pipes which needed repair or correction of voicing problems. Here every effort was made to retain the character of the original sound, with all its spontaneity and life. Beckerath voiced with a broad stroke. Much of the charm of his instruments comes from the skilled hand of master who wasted no time in achieving the fresh sound he sought. A restorer must resist the temptation to judge the original voicing by his own standards and taste. This is not easy as it might sound, for mechanical action organbuilding has not been a static craft since Beckerath's time. Much has been discovered about historical organbuilding practices, which was not known in 1962. Here the question was raised as to whether the tuning system of this organ should be changed from the romantic equal temperament to an unequal temperament which has gained currency today and was more appropriate to a classical organ. After careful thought it was decided that equal temperament should be retained as part of the character intended by the builder. Also it was decided that the current pitch of a 445 should not be lowered five cycles to present standards.

The restoration of the St. Paul organ is significant for many reasons. It has long been recognized as one of Beckerath's finest instruments. It is also represents the last large organ built before subtle changes appeared in his voicing style, which became increasingly bolder and less intimate with time. Also, while many of his other instruments have been changed to suit more current fashions among organists, this organ is, musically speaking, in completely original condition. As such it preserves the opportunity for future generations to hear the music as Beckerath wished, and to glimpse easily forgotten musical perspectives from our own recent but quickly receding past.

- *George Taylor, Taylor and Boody Organbuilders, Staunton, Virginia*

St. Paul Cathedral - Rudolf von Beckerath Organ 1962

In September of 1984, cathedral organist Paul Koch sought an organ overhaul and cleaning proposals from the Beckerath firm. The organ was covered and sealed during construction work on the interior of the cathedral which included a new floor, much plaster repair and painting, among other things. Koch's request for the organ included attention to the 'sagging pipes', the sluggish slider motors, the combination action, stop-knob mechanism. Months later, after much correspondence, a proposal was received from the Beckerath firm including an explanation of the cleaning process, as well as additional details concerning the renewal of the manual keyboards, pedal-keyboard, and eventual adjustment of the tracker-mechanism.

The cathedral was able to pay \$75k to the Beckerath firm for repairs which took place beginning in 1986. The scope of that work included cleaning, regulating, tuning, and replacement of some reed tongues. During this process iron rods were installed behind each of the pedal facade pipes as well as other large pipes within the pedal towers with the intention of arresting the 'sagging' pipes. David Richards of Allegheny Pipe Organ was introduced to the Beckerath firm at this time and would be named as the local curator of the instrument since the routine care by members of the Beckerath firm was not possible due to distance and expense.

Late in 2001 the cathedral commissioned a thorough Pipe Organ Condition Report from S.L. Huntington & Co. Subsequently, proposals were solicited and received from Beckerath Orgelbau, Allegheny Pipe Organs, S. L. Huntington & Co., Hans Ulrich Erbsloh, and Taylor & Boody Organbuilders. In July of 2004, Christoph Linde (who voiced the organ with Rudolf von Beckerath) was hired to assess the condition of the organ.

In the requested proposals, the builders were asked to include the replacement of stop motors, stop-knob mechanisms, combination system, and replacement of those pipes considered to have 'sagged'. Each builder included additional suggestions and considerations along with their proposals.

On October 24th, 2005, St. Paul Cathedral began the 100th year of its dedication. At that time the parish announced a multi-million dollar capital campaign which made possible projects including exterior masonry restoration, improved handicap accessibility, new electrical wiring, new illumination, undercroft renovation/modernization, replacement of heating/cooling system, and, finally the organ restoration which would be the third and final phase of the Capital Campaign.

Meanwhile, in the organ, old problems persisted requiring adjustment to stop motors, cleaning of stop knobs, calming guest recitalists over the lack of an adequate combination action, and hoping for pitch and tone from

sagging/collapsing pipes. The reservoirs could no longer wait for a future rehab and thus received a complete renewal during the summer of 2005. The cathedral music department announced the final public concert in May of 2006 due to the unreliable nature of the organ's mechanisms. While the instrument remained in use for the 700+ average annual cathedral liturgies/events, it "limped along", eagerly anticipating the beginning of its renewal. By the time the organ restoration work began on site in March of 2008, two-thirds of the organ was "uncontrollable" with many stops working sporadically, or not at all. Within many stops pipes were no longer speaking.

The scope of restoration of an instrument this size is vast, and a debt of gratitude is owed to the Taylor and Boodry firm for their expertise, diligence, and especially for their ability to work around, during, and throughout the constancy of life in the cathedral. T & B's commitment to 'getting it right', rather than rushing through the work allowed them to properly care for the many 'surprises' which were exposed along the way. Only in the process of dismantling the countless moving parts and sealed chests can an organ builder see the full extent of the work which is required. It is their, and the cathedral's expectation that this monument of organ building will remain, for generations to come, the work of art for which it justly known! - *Don Fellows, St. Paul Cathedral*

Regarding the 2008 Restoration...

Organs, like all artistic objects, reflect the cultural perspectives of the time and place in which they are made. The St. Paul organ by virtue of its sheer size and tonal grandeur offers a particularly bold statement by its builder, Rudolf von Beckerath (1907-1976) about what he believed the ideal organ should be. The design of the instrument is rooted in the ideas of the 20th century German Organ Reform Movement or "Orgelbewegung", which was formed in the 1920's by friends of the Beckerath family in Hamburg, who were captivated by the beauty of the antique organs of their city, particularly the long neglected organ of the St. Jakobi Church, built in 1693 by the famous Hamburg builder, Arp Schnitger. On hearing the music of J.S. Bach played on this authentic instrument, the group pressed for a return in new organs to the essential elements of design and construction, that had inspired the organbuilders and great composers of the 18th century and earlier. These principles would inform every facet of the organ's design, creating a unity of musical concept, architectural expression, technical simplicity, and artistic control, which had been overshadowed by the excesses of the Romantic period. Beckerath knew from an early age that he wanted to build organs as fine as Schnitger's and thus became a pioneer in the rebirth of principles of classical organbuilding. Because the necessary skills for building such instruments were no longer found in Germany, he served an apprenticeship

in Paris, where the traditional construction of slider windchests was still practiced. He soon rose to a position of leadership there as a master craftsman in the French school and gained broad experience in directing a large firm. However, his love for the German instruments called him back to Germany during the 1930's, where he gained the position of national authority over organs and bells. This gave him access to a wide variety of historic instruments in the country, many of which he was able to document. He also used his position to insure their protection against pillage by the government during the war, a practice which had taken a heavy toll on organs during the WWI. The war years, during which his research was destroyed, were spent as a translator in France. After being released from an American prison in 1945 he made his way back to Hamburg to start over with a fierce determination to realize his vocation as an independent builder. At the age of 42 he established a shop in Hamburg and there built from meager resources a daring and impressive 3 manual mechanical organ for the Hamburg Musikhalle. That project, coupled with the outstanding restoration of several antiques nearby, assured his success as a master thereafter.

Only thirteen years later the St. Paul organ was built. In it we find the influence of the many experiences of Beckerath's formative years. The basic clarity of early German organbuilding style is immediately obvious to the eye in the rational design of the this organ's case. All the tenets espoused by the "Orgelbewegung" are present here, from a responsive mechanical key action and slider windchests, to the classical scaling of the pipes. The brilliant stoplist is highly refined yet economical. Nothing is wasted. The years in France are more subtly reflected in the grand gesture of the organ's design, which makes possible the performance of an unusually wide variety of literature crossing national stylistic boundaries. While Beckerath was not the only European builder of his time to undertake large projects, what separates his work from others was his uncompromising attention to the sound of his organs. His happiest days were spent voicing pipes on site. In Pittsburgh he took five months working with his assistants, bringing each pipe to sing with a vocal quality of the antique organs he knew so well. It is the compelling beauty of the sound, the precision of the pipes' speech combined, and the warmth of tone, most noticeably in the Principal stops, which have endeared his work to so many.

The restoration of the St. Paul organ raised interesting questions for the restorer. One may well ask why restoration should be necessary after only fifty years. To this there are several answers. In returning to building practices of a long forgotten craft, Beckerath risked not knowing many secrets which made the old organs so durable. Only time would sort out problems there. When one adds to this the difficulty of obtaining high quality materials in postwar Germany it is easy to understand, for example, the structural failure