

Cover feature

Ruggles Pipe Organs, Conifer, Colorado Fairmount Presbyterian Church Memorial Chapel, Cleveland Heights, Ohio

From the builder

When I was asked to make recommendations for a new organ for Memorial Chapel, I recalled fond memories of playing the 1961 Holtkamp organ for senior high chapel services. At the time, it was actually more exciting to play the small, chamber-installed chapel organ than the large 3-manual organ in the main sanctuary, because the lively acoustics of the chapel were superior. The old organ served admirably until the ravages of time, a leaky roof and a curious remodeling (1989) of the chapel took their toll. After discussions with Robert Moncrief and the committee, I agreed to design a free-standing encased instrument, with a plenum based on a Principal 8' for better congregational support. (The prior organ was based on a Principal 4'.) Robert and I worked out the stoplist together, which includes a separate Quinte and Tierce, a string stop, Octave 8' in the Pedal, Tremulant and Zimbelstern.

While onsite to meet with the organ committee, I examined the old organ. There was considerable water damage, but most of the pipework was salvageable, so I removed it to storage at my Conifer workshop. Being part of the fellowship of one of the original "green industries" (organbuilders have been recycling for centuries), I found that I could successfully reuse some of the old pipework in the new organ, some of which was from an even older main sanctuary organ. Of greatest interest are the Dulciane, which was built by Aeolian, and the Holtkamp Mixture. The Dulciane is a most beautiful stop and its color works well in the new organ. The Mixture was based on a Principal 4' chorus, so I reconfigured and rescaled it to work with the new Principal 8' plenum, making new pipes to fill in the missing pitches. Its four ranks add more fullness than brilliance. The Quinte and Tierce are of Principal scale and blend well with the plenum, and provide colorful solo combinations as well.

The largest pipe in the façade is low E of the Principal 8'. All of the manual pipes are on one chest level behind the façade, in the upper case. The Octave 8' and treble of the Subbass are in the lower case, along with the blower and bellows. The lowest pipes of the Subbass are on the floor against the wall for best projection. The bellows is a single-rise wedge style. The suspended action runs straight up (via rollerboards) to pallet boxes at the front of the case, providing a simple, direct connection to the pallets.

The casework was designed along classic lines, without molding or decoration, to feel at home with the simple lines of the chapel interior. I used redwood for the side panels and pipe shades to provide some color contrast with the white oak. The center flat's descending doves were inspired by the dove motif in the stained-glass wall at the opposite end of the room. While seeking inspiration for the side tower shades, I was listening to a CD that contained Mendelssohn's lovely anthem "O for the wings of a dove," and I had my answer. The Celtic knot was an idea that Pastor Louise Westfall particularly liked.

Robert Moncrief's recital on October 5, 2008 beautifully demonstrated the colors of the organ as a solo instrument and as accompaniment to solo voice and congregational singing. The May 3 concert by the Shelly-Egler Duo further showed the versatility of the organ, alone and with flute. Imagine my delight when I sat down for the program, looked up at the pipe shades, then opened the program booklet to see the title of the second selection: *The Dove Descending*, by Dean K. Roush. After the concert, while I was speaking to Frances Shelly, she mentioned how much she enjoyed playing with this organ, especially how easy it



Charles Ruggles and Opus 30



Keyboards and drawknobs



Pipe shades



Side of case with Pedal Bourdon in back



Interior pipes

was to play in tune with it. She then inquired about the temperament. Having heard the old myth about the need for equal temperament for use with instruments one too many times, I was reassured of my convictions on this matter, by one with direct experience!

It has been a great honor to have designed and constructed this new pipe organ for Fairmount Church. It is my hope that it will glorify our Creator and enrich the congregation and the community in which it stands. I am thankful to the many people of the church who have supported me while the organ was being planned and constructed, with their funds, hospitality, thoughts, ideas and good wishes. Many thanks go to Bob Moncrief for encouraging and seeing this project through to completion.

—Charles Ruggles

From the minister of music

What a delightful surprise it is when parishioners appear at the organ console following morning worship to say that they would like to give a significant gift toward a new pipe organ! Such was the case when Dr. Richard and Mrs. Maurine Ruggles made such an offer to me following an 8:30 chapel service and challenged the congregation to join them in providing for a new instrument built by their organbuilder son, Charles Ruggles, of Conifer, Colorado. In his youth, Charles had played senior high chapel services there and never dreamed that he would build a new organ for that space. In the intervening years, Charles had become a highly regarded builder of fine mechanical-action organs.

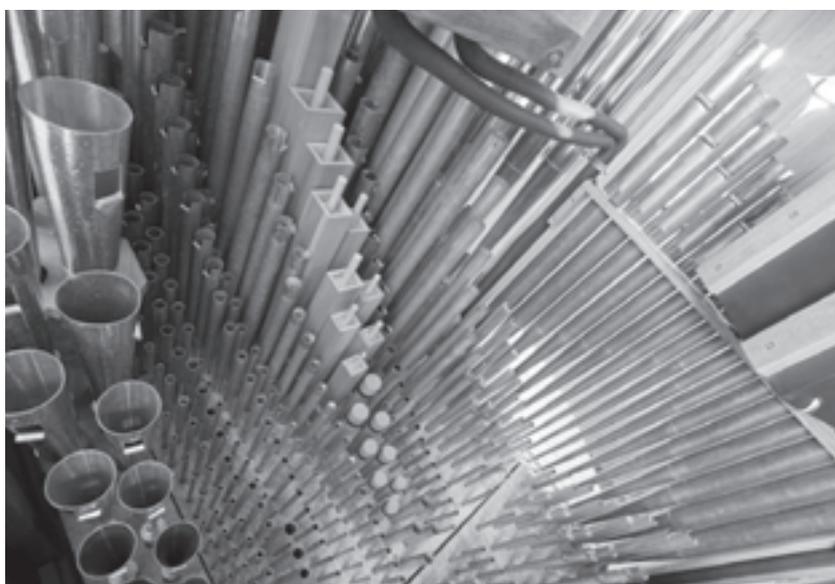
Plans got underway for an instrument that could support a congregation of as many as 150 for Sunday morning communion services, weddings, funerals, and chamber concerts. In a modest-sized instrument, every stop must be



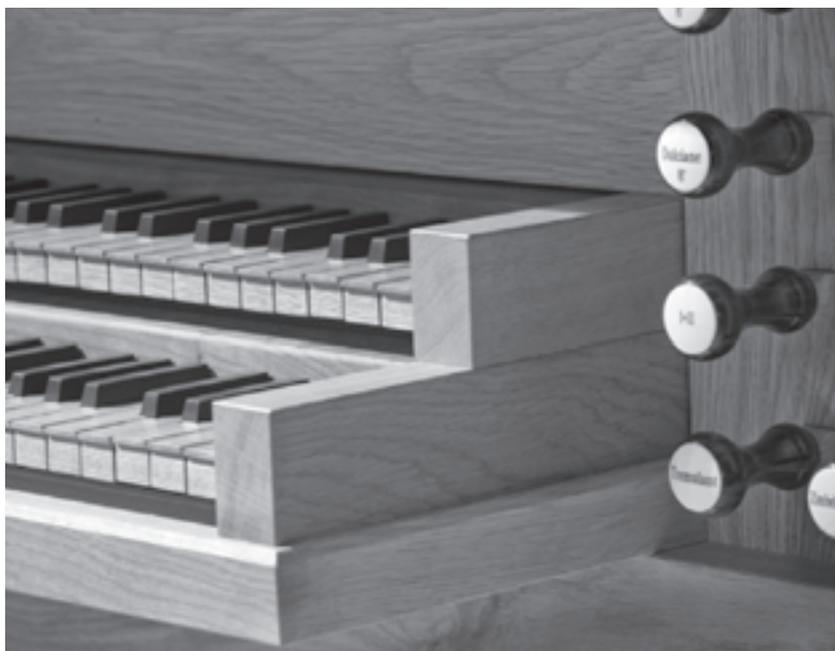
Pedal Bourdon



Interior pipes



Interior pipes



Drawknob and keyboard close up



Stained-glass dove motif

judiciously chosen and must contribute well to the ensemble. The specification has proven to be quite versatile, with the special usefulness of having the Quinte and Tierce on Manual I separated for individual purposes, and the Trumpet on Manual II, rather than in the Manual I chorus, for easy access in trumpet tunes for weddings and also as a solo voice in the pedal against Manual I stops. The Octave 8' in the pedal provides a firm foundation sound on top of the Subbass 16', while also functioning as another solo voice in the pedal. The absence of a celeste is barely noticed, as the gentle tremulant with the Dulciane and/or Gedackt is lovely. The Trumpet is incisive as a solo voice, but is also able to blend well in the full chorus. The 8-foot stops on Manual I are full-voiced individually, but become richer when used together.

A new organ provided the impetus for refurbishing Fairmount's chapel, which had been built in 1956, when there were 1,350 Sunday School members in a congregation of 3,000. The chapel, which followed the classic, stately lines of the sanctuary but included dramatic contemporary elements like a tall, hidden window washing the rear wall of the chancel, had been meant primarily for youth worship. By the 1980s, its uses had expanded to activities that were served better by flexible seating and softer lines. To the detriment of music-making, this brought with it plush carpeting in the chancel and lower pile carpeting throughout the room, along with padded seats and other sound-absorbing details. The most striking aspects of the chapel—a wall of contemporary stained glass at the end opposite the chancel and terra cotta sculptures on the chancel wall by William McVey, head of sculpture at the Cleveland Art Institute—still were in place and had an important impact on the placement and appearance of a new instrument. The cushioning done during the '80s had greatly muffled the former organ in its two-level chamber installation at the side of the chancel, so it was logical to bring an organ case out into the chancel, carefully negotiating the sculptures on the wall. The plush carpet of the chancel gave way to a handsome new oak floor, and the side chancel walls and panels between windows in the seating area were all reinforced with extra layers of hard surface, as suggested by acoustician Dana Kirkegaard.

The challenge of the architects, Wolf and Maison of Cleveland, was to blend the classic 1956 building with the 1988 renovation and the proposed 2008 organ. Charles Ruggles' design for the new organ showed clean lines, blending oak frames around redwood panels, with understated ornamentation, notably reflecting the doves in the stained glass window-wall. Curved walls that protruded from the chancel were restored to their original lines, and rich colors of paint helped to make the design of the chapel more cohesive, incorporating the elements of the original chapel and the 1980s renovation. Bright lighting further enlivens the worship space and highlights the warmth of the wood chancel floor and the organ case.

The improved acoustic was evident as the congregation began singing hymns at the first service in the chapel. The acous-

tic is warm and live and allows the organ to sing and fill the room with sound. A service of dedication led by Pastor Louise Westfall and a recital of works for the liturgical year ("For All Seasons") by Fairmount's minister of music on Sunday, October 5, 2008, introduced the new instrument to the community. The instrument was further celebrated on Sunday, May 3, when the Shelly-Egler Duo (Frances Shelly, flute, from Wichita State University, and Steven Egler, organ, from Central Michigan University) played a program of works by Telemann, Bach, Widor, Dan Locklair, Dean K. Roush, and Bernard Wayne Sanders. This concert was co-sponsored by the Cleveland Chapter of the AGO.

The new Ruggles organ is a wonderful complement to the 100-rank Schantz organ installed in Fairmount's sanctuary in 1996. Its importance to the Cleveland musical community and especially to nearby Cleveland Institute of Music organ students was highlighted by a generous grant from Cleveland's Kulas Foundation during the fund-raising campaign. The challenge of Dr. and Mrs. Ruggles and other notable donors in the congregation has resulted in a beautiful worship and chamber music space and an elegant new instrument in Cleveland Heights.

—Robert Moncrief
Minister of Music
Fairmount Presbyterian Church
Cleveland Heights, Ohio

Charles M. Ruggles, Opus 30, 2008

MANUAL I

8' Principal
8' Rohrflöte
4' Octave
2½' Quinte
2' Octave
1½' Tierce
Mixture

MANUAL II

8' Dulciane
8' Gedackt
4' Flute
2' Blockflöte
8' Trumpet

PEDAL

16' Subbass
8' Octave

Tremulant
Zimbelstern
Three usual couplers

Mechanical key and stop action
Slider windchests; winding: manuals 75 mm, pedal 100 mm
Compass: manuals 56 notes, pedal 30 notes
Cone-tuned; Thomas Young temperament (1800)
Case: white oak, with redwood panels and pipe shades
Keys: cherry, with ebony sharps
Drawknobs: rosewood
Installation and finishing: Charles Ruggles, Dana Hull
Installation assistants: Clay Orndorff, Grant Orndorff

Ruggles Pipe Organs
303/838-0065
<Rugglesorgans@aol.com>
<www.rugglesorgans.com>

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