

COVER FEATURE

SARDIS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA

REUTER ORGAN COMPANY



Antiphonal

From the Builder

We began our initial conversations with the Organ Research Committee at Sardis Presbyterian Church in 2001. The committee members represented an energetic congregation with well-established music traditions. They expressed their desire to support dynamic worship with a new instrument that would lead the congregation for generations.

Ken and Sharon DeBoer, the husband and wife team who direct the Sardis Music Ministry, traveled extensively across the country with various members of the congregation to visit installations and talk with clients of a number of builder candidates. The committee research was very thorough. In our case alone, instruments were auditioned in Pittsburgh, Allentown, Philadelphia, Winston-Salem, Chicago, and Virginia Beach. We

were especially pleased to be awarded the contract to build their new instrument with a unanimous vote of the congregation.

As committee members explored the tonal resources of other Reuter installations and shared their observations, we began to develop the overall concept for the Sardis organ. To honor the stewardship of an earlier generation, the committee expressed a desire to consider the prudent use of elements from their existing organ, Möller's Opus 9364, in the new instrument.

Several of the venues the committee visited illustrated Reuter's ability to craft pipe organs of superior musical integrity that incorporated existing components. While the marriage of new with old presents unique mechanical and tonal challenges, we are always ready to apply our expertise and creative energy to consider such endeavors. With an accommodating spirit guiding our discourse, an uncompromising commitment to quality always remains steadfast.

While attending both choir rehearsals and worship services, we analyzed the acoustics of the Sardis sanctuary and the effect of the existing instrument. The foundation tone of the organ was weak in leading congregational singing. Typical of its time, the scaling of the Möller pipes made the sound rather thin through the hymn singing range, but then gained disproportionate loudness in the upper ranges. There was also a pronounced absence of supportive sounds for choral accompaniment.

We subsequently completed a detailed evaluation of the existing instrument and studied ways to assimilate the best of its pipework in the new specification. Although some of the old stops necessarily were retired, many ranks were assigned a supporting role in the new specification. All were comprehensively reconditioned and revoiced; many were re-scaled and used in different divisions and at new pitch levels.

The sanctuary of Sardis Presbyterian Church is an A-frame design with brick walls—visually compelling, but acoustically challenging. Its wooden ceiling soars to a height of three stories, superimposed over massive beams in the form of Gothic arches. The nave windows, commissioned from the Willet Stained Glass Studios in Philadelphia, focus on traditionally executed subjects with subtle, contemporary backgrounds. The 16' facade, framed by the chancel's rectangular columns and parquet floor, is conceived to integrate seamlessly with the surrounding architectural elements.

The new organ is designed and voiced to offer abundant tonal variety, and scaled to develop much of its strength across the human vocal range. Indeed, the organ is able to lead a full congregation with 8' tone alone. The upperwork and reeds are voiced in a proper proportion to create a cohesive full

ensemble. Both the Swell and Choir divisions have abundant tonal resources available in the 8' vocal range to offer a huge color and dynamic range for choral support, this without needing to draw upper pitches that often compete with the singers.

As is our custom, we have made subsequent visits to review voicing after the DeBoers had opportunities to play and experience the instrument in all of its intended uses. Since it is much more feasible to increase, rather than to decrease, an organ's power, we prefer to leave ourselves some reserve to call upon if needed. We tapped that reserve to enhance sound projection into the room by adjusting wind pressures, voicing, and even pipe scales. Eventually, three stops received replacement ranks before optimum results were achieved. The final product is a strong, versatile instrument that effortlessly fills the room with sound and invites one to sing.

It has been a great pleasure working with the people of Sardis Presbyterian Church. Their admiration for the North Carolina Tar Heels and our affinity for the ultimately victorious Kansas Jayhawks added a special dimension to an organ installation scheduled during college basketball tournament season (and there's a Jayhawk flag hanging in the organ chamber to prove it!). We appreciate the dedicated work of the organ committee members, guided by the discerning leadership of Wayne Docherty. We applaud Bradley Hunter Welch for his eloquent musicianship—one of the highlights of his dedication recital included the Virgil Fox arrangement of *Come, Sweet Death*, deftly played and registered with Wanamaker-like effectiveness. Finally, we are especially thankful for Ken and Sharon DeBoer, whose vision and tireless enthusiasm brought this project to such a successful conclusion.

ALBERT "JR" NEUTEL, President
WILLIAM KLIMAS, Artistic Director
RONALD KREBS, Vice President

REUTER PERSONNEL

Monty Amick	Steve Major
John Bechen	Kay Miller
Trace Bunker	David Nelms
Ted Burgess	Albert Neutel
Tom Cashen	JR Neutel
Proctor Crow	Jeff Noll
Rod Czerniak	John Regier
Ed Dorssom	George Renault
Mike Eaton	Chris Ruhlman
Robert Fort	Dorothy Schaake
Don Gauthier	Kirt Sharp
David Hadl	David Swanson
Megan Hulse	Phil Swartz
Lloyd Jensen	Karl Swoyer
Bill Klimas	Robert Vaughan
Ron Krebs	Tom Watgen
Kay Leach	Fred Whitehead
John Leach	Aaron Young
Morgan Lowry	Brent Yuille

From the Directors of Music Ministries

Choosing a new organ for a venerable congregation founded in 1790 is a wonderful privilege, one so special that many organists never have the opportunity to be a part of such a process. The journey from the tuning fork, which allowed for the lining out of hymns in the early days of the congregation, to our wonderful new Reuter organ is a great tribute to the commitment of Sardis Presbyterian Church to "make a joyful noise" unto our Lord.

The process began in the year 2000 and culminated in 2008, a long period indeed, but one that happily ended with the installation of an outstanding 72-rank instrument. It will lead the worship services of our church for many generations yet to come.

In the very earliest meetings on the design of the organ, requirements were established:

The ability to lead a large congregation in the singing of hymns in corporate worship.

The flexibility to accompany the diverse singing and ringing choirs of the church (seven singing and five bell choirs), as well as to occasionally augment separate orchestral accompaniment for performances of major choral works.

The capability to play diverse organ literature of a great number of periods and styles as a liturgical function in worship services.

The ability to play musical literature written specifically for weddings and funerals as well as recital literature for concerts.

It was also decided early on that we wanted to limit our consideration to American organbuilding firms. We felt that there were several American organ companies of excellence, and we desired to support our fellow citizens in the United States. Reuter was among the names that immediately came to mind for further consideration. Because of this, and with the desire for an instrument in the American Classic tradition, the field was narrowed to four companies, and we ultimately chose the Reuter Organ Company.

In replacing the Möller instrument, which had served our congregation for 48 years, one of our desires was to incorporate some pipework from the former organ into the new instrument for two reasons. First, the family that funded the Möller organ is still represented in the congregation, and by incorporating the old into the new we would have a continuum of the church's musical history. Second, we hoped to realize some cost savings. However, we determined that no rank of pipes from the Möller would be used if it in any way would compromise the integrity of the new, finished product.

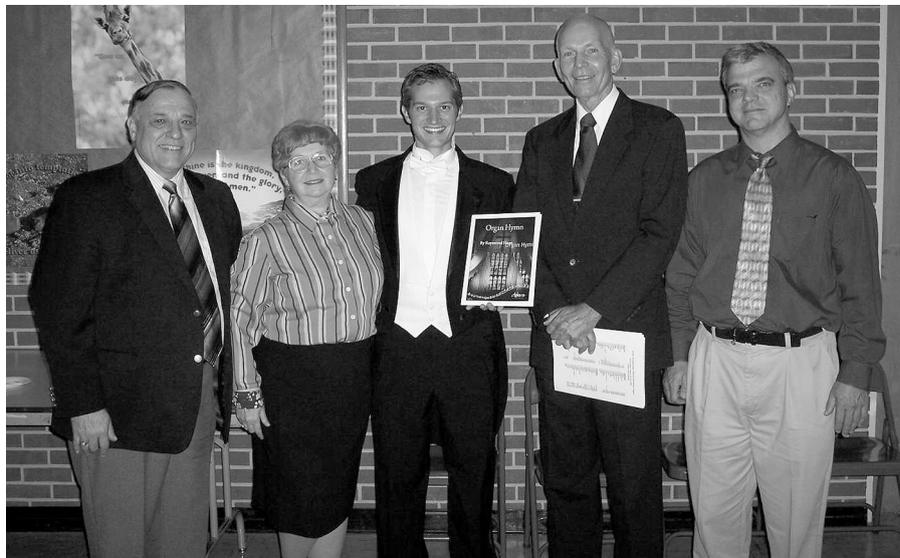
When the current building was built in 1960 by a congregation of about 500 members, they exhibited great foresight by building a sanctuary that could seat almost twice the number of the total membership. This building now serves a congregation almost five times the size of the earlier one. They also had the vision to provide room to accommodate a much larger organ than had been previously installed. Indeed, there were two organ chambers that contained no pipes, as well as a large, direct radiating chamber that housed the organ. All chambers are now being utilized by the new organ.

One of the ideas that was not a part of the 1960 installation was an antiphonal division. We have integrated this into the new organ, as well as making the console movable for concert work.

My wife, Sharon, and I traveled many thousands of miles in an effort to see and hear instruments from four different organ companies, often accompanied by other members of the congregation. Each time we were more and more convinced that the Reuter Organ Company offered the finest product for Sardis Presbyterian Church. With that strong belief, in my role as consul-



Assembly



Concert artist Bradley Hunter Welch is holding a copy of *Organ Hymn*, a work commissioned from Raymond Haan and premiered at the dedication recital. From left to right: Ken DeBoer, Sharon DeBoer, Welch, Haan, and Bill Klimas

tant to the organ committee, I recommended that Reuter be selected by the committee.

We praise God that when the recommendation was made to the congregation, they unanimously approved it and quickly raised the required funds, actually exceeding the established goal.

It is with gratitude to God that we now have this fine instrument with which to bring him our praise. This new organ will surely help us to "make a joyful noise unto the Lord."

KENNETH A. DEBOER AND SHARON J. DEBOER

From the Organ Committee

The genesis of our Reuter organ was at a church officers' retreat in January 2000, when Senior Pastor Tom Kort asked those present to "dream dreams" for the future of Sardis Presbyterian Church. Since the 1960 vintage Möller organ in the sanctuary was already showing signs that it was approaching

the end of its useful life, the chair of the Stewardship Committee was prompted to think of the need for an orderly plan to replace the organ as a requirement for the medium-term future. He subsequently discussed the subject with the Finance Committee and then with Ken DeBoer, director of music ministries.

As a result of ensuing discussions, the Session created the first Organ Study Committee in November 2000. Members of the committee traveled some 10,000 miles visiting organbuilders' facilities and their installed organs. The committee's recommendations were presented to the Worship Committee in May 2005 and to a wider group of committee chairs and co-chairs in July 2005. With the input of those groups, we subsequently presented them to a joint session of church officers in February 2006.

In response to those recommendations, a new ad hoc Organ Committee was created by

the Session. That committee met for the first time on February 28, 2006. The committee interviewed and obtained proposals from four organbuilders and visited installed organs of three of them in three states, accompanied by other members of the congregation at large. The recommendation of the Reuter organ was made to the Session on August 28, 2006.

A new Organ Committee was created that met for the first time on January 23, 2007, and undertook an educational campaign to inform the congregation of the need to replace the organ and the details of the proposed Reuter project. At the same time, "background" fund-raising was initiated to jump-start the financing of the project. On June 10, 2007, with more than 72% of the project cost already raised, the congregation voted unanimously to proceed.

After the contract with the Reuter Organ Company was signed later in June 2007, an implementation team worked diligently with the organbuilder, local contractors, and Ken DeBoer to oversee the removal of the old organ and the installation of the new one.

Although it has been more than eight years since the genesis in early 2000, the wonderful sounds we are now hearing certainly are worth the wait. I am pleased and proud to have had the opportunity to work with so many dedicated church members and the Reuter Company over those eight years that enabled a successful conclusion to a prolonged endeavor that finally has produced an organ with which Sardis can truly "Make a Joyful Noise" for generations to come.

WAYNE R. DOCHERTY

From the Recitalist

What is required for success when building a pipe organ for a church? Most of us know the basic requirements—leading congregational song, providing choir accompaniment, partnering with other instruments, and playing a wide variety of organ literature for services and concerts.

But in practice, how is this accomplished? I have found the two most important traits are *versatility*—in variety of color, dynamic range, aids in registration—and *stability*—of tuning, reliability, and ease of maintenance. While preparing and performing the dedicatory recital on Reuter's Opus 2233 at Sardis Presbyterian Church, I was quite impressed on both accounts!

As the recitalist, I will address this instrument's impressive versatility. Choosing registration was both a challenge and a joy because of the plethora of coloristic options available. Independent principal choruses form the backbone of all three manual divisions and pedal, while a small floating division at the rear of the church provides congregational support and antiphonal effects. A total of ten different ranks of manual flutes employ stopped, open, chimney, and harmonic construction—each one yielding a different sonority. Similarly, four pairs of celestes provide both broad and narrow string colors, along with whispery-soft Erzähler and "blue smoke" Flute Celeste effects.

Finally, eleven ranks of reeds round out the instrument: a powerful Swell chorus; an ethereal Vox Humana, and an antique-sounding Fagotto; several luxury orchestral colors—French Horn, Clarinet, and English Horn; a glorious Tuba (enclosed in the

Choir); and a commanding Trompette en Chamade (located at the rear of the church) crowns the entire organ. Judicious borrowing of several of these solo reeds to other manuals increases the solo/accompaniment pairings.

Extensions of the 16' manual stops add versatility by providing several different timbres, keen and opaque, at 16' and 8' pitch levels in both the Pedal and manual divisions. Additionally, the Contre Bombarde 32' is enclosed within the Swell, thereby serving effectively in choral accompaniment and as a climax stop. The well-composed mixtures provide a variety of "top" to the various ensembles—some gently blending with softer combinations while others sparkle brilliantly without ever squealing.

A playback mechanism, combined with a full complement of couplers and pistons, made the job of choosing, combining, and maneuvering among these wonderful colors quite easy. The instrument is capable of going seamlessly from the softest, barely audible whisper to a powerful, majestic roar and back again. The prompt action and skillful placement of divisions provide crispness and clarity in all styles and periods of music.

Congratulations to the congregation of Sardis Presbyterian Church, thanks to Ken and Sharon DeBoer for their initial vision and tenacity in seeing this project through to completion, and kudos to JR Neutel and all at the Reuter Organ Company for the fine work they are doing! It was an honor and a joy to be a part of this celebration of Opus 2233.

BRADLEY HUNTER WELCH

Sardis Presbyterian Church Charlotte, North Carolina Reuter Opus 2233 • Three Manuals 72 Ranks • Installed 2008

GREAT	SWELL	CHOIR	PEDAL
16 Violone	16 Rohrflute	16 Gambe	32 * Bourdon (ext.)
8 Diapason	8 Geigen Diapason	8 Diapason	16 Principal
8 Violone (ext.)	8 Viole	8 Stopped Diapason	16 Violone (Gt.)
8 Harmonic Flute	8 Viole Celeste (CC)	8 Open Flute	16 Bourdon
8 Open Flute (Ch.)	8 Rohrflute (ext.)	8 Gambe (ext.)	16 Rohrflute (Sw.)
8 Bourdon	8 Flute Dolce	8 Gambe Celeste (TC)	16 Gambe (Ch.)
4 Octave	8 Flute Celeste (TC)	8 Erzähler	8 Principal (ext.)
4 Spillflute	4 Principal	8 Erzähler Celeste (GG)	8 Violone (Gt.)
2½ Quint	4 Hohlflute	4 Principal	8 Bourdon (ext.)
2 Super Octave	2 Nazard	4 Harmonic Flute	8 Open Flute (Ch.)
Cornet III (TC)	2 Flautino	2 Doublette	8 Rohrflute (Sw.)
Fourniture III–IV	1½ Tierce	1½ Larigot	8 Gambe (Ch.)
Scharf III–IV	Plein Jeu IV	Mixture III–IV	4 Choral Bass
16 Bombarde (Sw.)	16 Bombarde	16 Fagotto	4 Bourdon (ext.)
8 Tromba	8 Trompette	8 Fagotto (ext.)	Mixture IV
8 Fagotto (Ch.)	8 Oboe	8 Clarinet	32 Contre Bombarde (ext.)
8 Clarinet (Ch.)	8 Vox Humana	8 French Horn	16 Posaune
8 French Horn (Ch.)	4 Clarion (ext. of Bombarde)	8 English Horn	16 Bombarde (Sw.)
8 English Horn (Ch.)	16 Trompette en Chamade	16 Tuba (TC)	16 Fagotto (Ch.)
8 Tuba (Ch.)	8 Trompette en Chamade	8 Tuba	8 Posaune (ext.)
8 Trompette en Chamade	Tremulant	8 Trompette en Chamade	8 Bombarde (Sw.)
Tremulant	MIDI	Tremulant	8 Fagotto (Ch.)
Chimes		MIDI	4 Posaune (ext.)
MIDI			4 Clarion (Sw.)
		ANTIPHONAL (floating)	4 Clarinet (Ch.)
		8 Principal	8 Tuba (Ch.)
		8 Gedeckt	8 Trompette en Chamade
		4 Prestant	Chimes (Gt.)
		4 Gedeckt (ext.)	MIDI
		2 Doublette (ext.)	

* = digital