

## Centennial Celebration of the Pipe Organ at Trinity Presbyterian Church

The people of Trinity Presbyterian Church, Berwyn, marked the last two Sundays of September 2016 with a celebration of the 100th Anniversary of the installation of the church's original pipe organ. In 1916 William H. Fritz presented a pipe organ to the church in memory of his parents, Henry and Mary Lobb Fritz, who were early members. In a letter to Mr. Fritz, recognizing the gift for the church, Dr. James Aiken expressed the "... deep appreciation of the very valuable addition to our ... property, which we feel will be a great help in all the work of the church ... and the added interest it will give to those who in the future will raise their voices in praise and thanksgiving .... makes it a fitting tribute to your parents' memory."

Trinity's organ was built by the Haskell Organ Company of Philadelphia. It contained nine ranks and 518 pipes and was used in a recital on Thursday, September 14, 1916, given by Frederick Maxson, organist at First Baptist Church in Philadelphia. It was used for the first time in a service of worship on Sunday, September 17, 1916.

In 1960, the organ was expanded to 15 ranks (1032 pipes) by Jacob Gerger and Sons of Croydon, Pennsylvania. The new ranks included Strings, Gemshorn, Rohr Flute, Octave and Trumpet. A set of 25 Deagan Chimes was installed. Mrs. Alberta Meadowcroft, organist at Trinity at the time, assisted in this project.

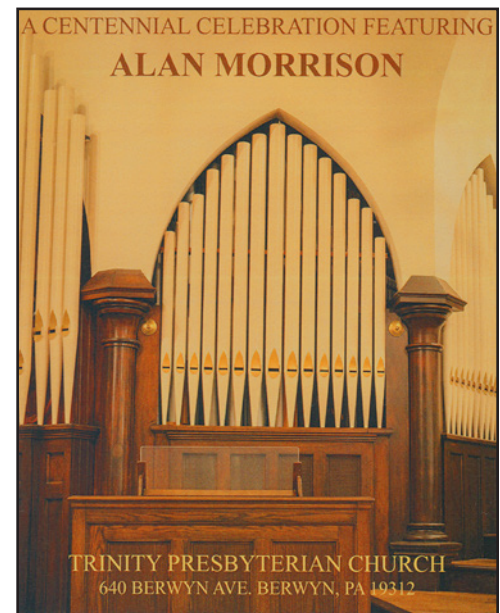
The organ was completely rebuilt in the summer of 1985 by Bruce Shultz and Company of Philadelphia to its present specifications of 25 ranks and 1463 pipes. The extension of the organ's upper and lower range greatly increased the instrument's capability to provide full hymn accompaniments as well as inspiring service music. Two new reeds stops were custom-made by Trivo in Hagerstown, Maryland. Principal and flue work were handmade by Organ Supply Industry at Erie. All pipes were specifically designed for the church's unique acoustical conditions and voiced by Mr. Shultz with the assistance of Dr. Harry Wilkinson of West Chester University. All but four of the original ranks were retained and completely revoiced. The chimes were provided with a new electric adjustable action. A new solid oak three-manual console was also added.

In the years following this rebuild, several recitals were given on the instrument. A re-dedication concert was given by Dr. Jeffrey Walker, Director of Music at historic St. David's Episcopal Church in Wayne, a recital by Mr. Bruce Shultz and two recitals by Rebecca Kleintop Owen, former organist at Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, and present organist at Central Moravian Church, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

In 2012 Jacob Gerger and Sons completed an extensive upgrade of the instrument. The organ was silent from June of that year until just before Christmas. The console was rebuilt with installation of a new integrated microprocessor-based organ control system with multiple memory levels (99), programmable Crescendo and Sforzando, Transposer and MIDI interface. The existing blower which had been located within the organ chamber was relocated under the floor of the sanctuary in front of the chamber allowing better access for tuning and repairs, and to reduce its noise. The 16-foot Bourdon electro-pneumatic unit wind chest was re-leathered. A new servo motor shade operator replaced the poorly functioning system that operated the shades on the swell box and a record/playback sequencer was installed allowing the organist to record and playback music. Peter Gerger also rearranged the stop configuration on the console giving greater flexibility to the organist. Finally, four wooden panels in front of the organ case in front of sections of the great organ pipes were removed and replaced with fabric allowing greater egress of the sound.

Highlights during the celebration included an after-worship Postlude on September 18, presented by 22-year Trinity organist, Larry Langhans, of "Toccata" from Symphony No.5 of Charles Marie Widor, leading French organist, and the Centennial Recital presented on Sunday afternoon September 25 by organist Alan Morrison, head of the organ department of Curtis Institute of Music. Mr. Morrison's program included works by Johann Bernhard Bach, Johann Sebastian Bach, Charles Marie Widor, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Harold Stover, Horatio Parker, and Frederick Maxson.

After one hundred years, Trinity's organ continues to lead its congregation in worship, providing inspiration, joy and comfort. — *Herb Fry and Larry Langhans*



Cover of program booklet