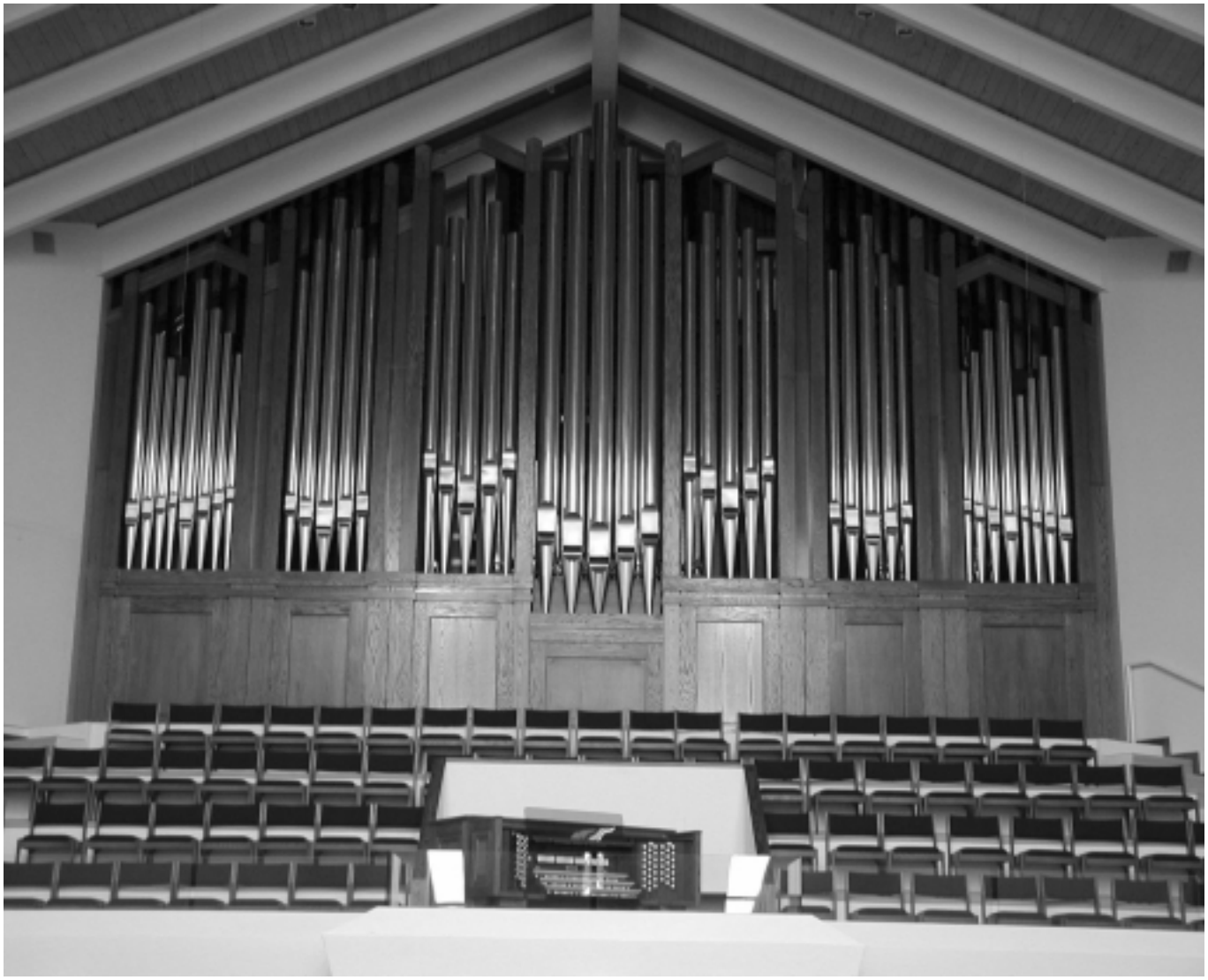
Cover Feature
CANYON CREEK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, RICHARDSON, TEXAS QUIMBY PIPE ORGANS INC.

John L. Speller



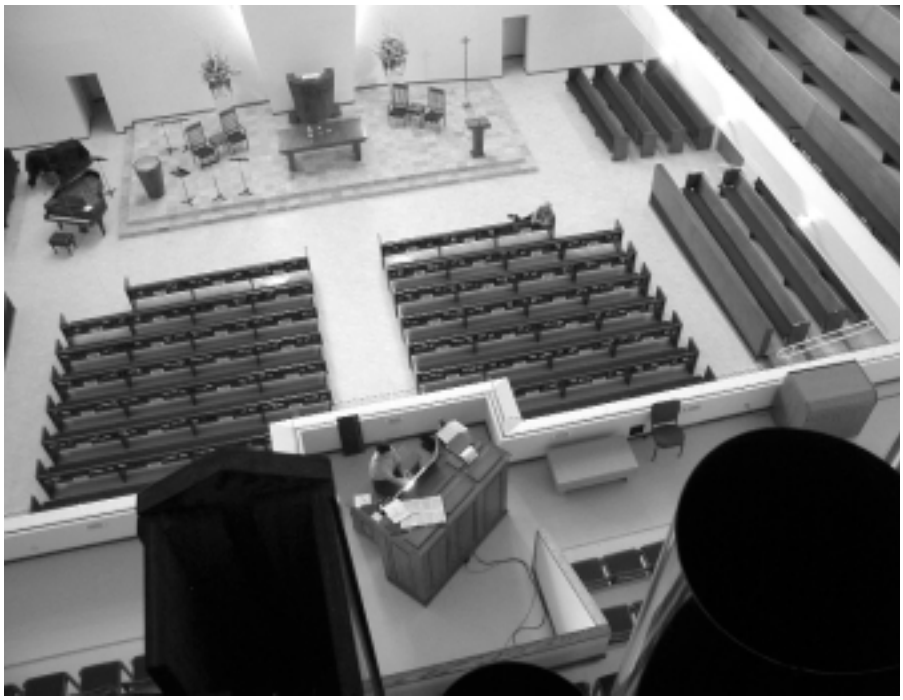
Canyon Creek Presbyterian Church (PCUSA) is a prominent contemporary building in Richardson, Texas, a city some twelve miles northeast of Dallas. James E. Langford, Architects and Planners LLC designed the church whose 20-foot gilded cross crowns the spire 130 feet above the neighborhood. While the new building was being planned, the organ committee began their search for a suitable pipe organ for the church under the guidance of consultant Colin Howland, organist of Park Cities Presbyterian Church in Dallas. Quimby Pipe Organs of Warrensburg, Missouri, was selected as the builder, and the design for the instrument, the firm's Opus 61, was drawn up by QPO president and tonal director Michael Quimby, in consultation with Mr. Howland and with Sally Hall, the organist of the church.

The new organ is a three-manual-and-pedal instrument of 57 ranks. The oak case with polished zinc facade pipes is located with the choir in the west gallery of the church. The warm oak hues of the casework make a striking contrast with the intentional severity of the rest of the white-walled church. The building has excellent acoustics, with approximately three seconds of reverberation to enhance the sound of the organ. The instrument incorporates a number of historical ranks, which include five flue stops and three reed stops by Ernest M. Skinner. No digital ranks or basses are used in the instrument.

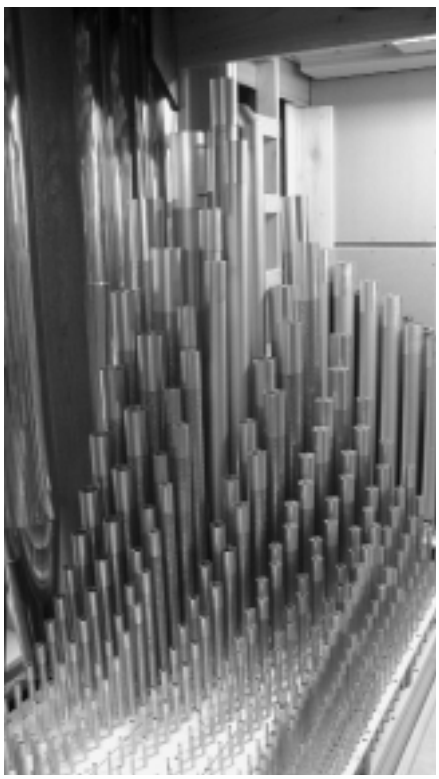
The tonal design of the Canyon Creek organ is loosely based on that of Quimby Pipe Organs' Opus 55 (2002) at William Jewell College in Liberty, Missouri, and like that instrument is essentially romantic-symphonic in its conception. Beside the differences in scaling and voicing necessitated by the larger and more resonant room, however, there are a number of important differences between the two instruments. In particular, the tonal design of the Canyon Creek organ has been developed a bit more in the symphonic direction, so that, for example, the Great flute

and reed stops of the Canyon Creek organ are enclosed, and the Swell strings have a more orchestral character. Whereas limited space for the 32' Pedal reed at William Jewell College necessitated a half-length bass for pipes 1–12, the Canyon Creek 32' Contra Trombone unit has full-length mitered resonators for the 32' octave, and, like the Tuba, French Horn, and Harmonic Trumpet, is voiced on high-pressure wind. For situations in which the Pedal 16' Trombone is a little *de trop* there are, of course, two softer 16' reeds available in the Pedal division as well. One of these, the Choir 16' Bass Clarinet, is a stop not found on the William Jewell organ, as also is the Choir 8' French Horn. QPO's head voicer voiced the French Horn on 15" wind pressure, and both its dynamic level and "bubble" give it a more convincingly orchestral horn timbre than most French Horn organ stops. This register has indeed proven itself so successful that QPO intends to replicate it in future instruments.

The full organ is a massive and impressive sound that fills the church without overwhelming it, and in which, as in some 19th-century organs, the reeds rather than the flues tend to predominate. Heavy pressures are used for certain of the reed ranks but, as with 19th-century organbuilders such as Henry Willis, the higher pressures are used primarily for refinement rather than for power. Some very attractive balances are available between the manual divisions. The Great diapason chorus is slightly louder than those of the Swell and Choir, which are of equal volume to each other, but all three manual choruses are of very different character. An interesting feature of the Swell and Choir mixtures is that in the break nearest the middle of the keyboard, the highest-pitched rank, rather than dropping out immediately, continues upward for several notes. With careful attention to the volume of the pipes, this helps to smooth the transition between the breaks and makes the breaking-back of the mixtures almost imperceptible. This experiment has worked so well that QPO intends to repeat it in future instruments. Furthermore, with the judicious use of the different unison ranks, the choruses can be suited both to romantic and classical music, so that the organ can convincingly realize the work of composers like Bach and Buxtehude as well as of more romantic composers such as Franck and Widor. As in the QPO organs at William Jewell College and the First Baptist Church, Jackson, Mississippi, the Tuba and Harmonic Trumpet stops can be played against each other to produce an interesting dialogue, or may be drawn together to create a heroic effect. Like the William Jewell organ, the Canyon Creek instrument has an open 16' stop on each manual, including 16' string stops on the Swell and Choir that also play on the Pedal. The quint and tierce stops on the Great and Swell can be used with various 8', 4', and 2' ranks to create an almost endless variety of cornet effects. There are also numerous contrasting effects available between the flutes of the three divisions, including some that are well suited to the Romantic repertoire and others that are ideal for the performance of Baroque and Classical music. The versatility of the instrument for playing organ repertoire in a wide range of musical styles combines with the liveliness of the acoustics to produce the impression in the listener that the organ is much larger than it is. The effect is perhaps of an instrument of a hundred ranks or more, rather than of the 57 ranks that the Canyon Creek organ actually contains.



As in most of Quimby Pipe Organs' instruments, the Canyon Creek organ makes use of Blackinton-style electropneumatic slider windchests, with pneumatic pallets for the main chests, and electropneumatic pouch chests for the reeds and unit ranks. The use of electropneumatic unit chests not only allows some judicious borrowings and facilitates the use of different pressures for the reed stops, they have been adopted because it is part of the QPO philosophy that flue stops speak better on this style of windchest. The handsome solid-oak detached and movable three-manual-and-pedal Skinner-style drawknob console with a walnut interior is equipped with solid-state multiplex switching and a solid-state combination action with 99 levels of memory and a piston sequencer. Associates of Quimby Pipe Organs who made significant contributions to the construction of this instrument are Joshua Bach, Andrew Burkhart, Bart Colliver, Mark Cline, Tim Duchon, Chris Emerson, Charles Ford, Eric Johnson, Larry Kinder, Wes Martin, Brad McGuffey, Joseph Nielsen, Gary Olden, Erik Otter, Michael Quimby, Janille Rehkop, Mike Shields, John Speller, and Elizabeth Viscusi. The organ was first used in worship at Canyon Creek Presbyterian Church on Sunday, August 21, 2005, and was dedicated on September 11, 2005, by concert organist Bradley Hunter Welch. Since then, there have been a number of recitals by prominent players, and the instrument has already established itself as a significant organ in the Dallas metropolitan area.



Great division

CANYON CREEK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Richardson, Texas
QUIMBY PIPE ORGANS INC.
Warrensburg, Missouri

GREAT
(flues 5" w.p.; reeds 7½" w.p.; partly enclosed)
16 Open Diapason (encl. 1–7 from Pedal 16 Diapason)
8 Open Diapason
8 Harmonic Flute (encl.)
8 Stopped Diapason (encl.)
8 Violoncello
4 Octave
4 Spire Flute (encl.)
2⅔ Twelfth
2 Fifteenth
1⅗ Seventeenth
1⅓ Mixture IV
16 Contra Oboe (Sw.)
8 Trumpet (encl.)
4 Clarion (encl.)
8 Tuba (Ch.)
8 Harmonic Trumpet (Ch.)
Flute Tremolo
Chimes
MIDI on Great
16 Great to Great
Great Unison Off
4 Great to Great

SWELL
(flues 5" w.p.; reeds 6" w.p.; enclosed)
16 Contra Gamba
8 Diapason
8 Gamba (ext.)
8 Gamba Celeste
8 Chimney Flute
8 Flauto Dolce
8 Flute Celeste (TC)
4 Octave
4 Nachthorn
2⅔ Nazard
2 Flageolet
1⅗ Tierce
2 Mixture IV–V
16 Contra Oboe
8 Trompette
8 Oboe (ext.)
8 Vox Humana
4 Clarion
Tremolo
8 Harmonic Trumpet (Ch.)
MIDI on Swell
16 Swell to Swell
Swell Unison Off
4 Swell to Swell

CHOIR
(flues 5" w.p.; reeds 6" w.p.; Tuba, Harm. Trumpet, and French Horn 15" w.p.; enclosed)
16 Erzähler
8 Geigen Diapason
8 Flauto Traverso
8 Erzähler (ext.)
8 Erzähler Celeste (TC)
4 Geigen Octave
4 Harmonic Flute
2 Harmonic Piccolo
1⅓ Mixture III–IV
16 Bass Clarinet
8 Tuba
8 Harmonic Trumpet
8 Clarinet (ext.)
8 English Horn
8 French Horn
Tremolo
MIDI on Choir
16 Choir to Choir
Choir Unison Off
4 Choir to Choir

PEDAL
(flues 4", 5", and 6" w.p.; trombone 15" w.p.; unenclosed)
32 Contra Bourdon (1–5 and 7 resultant)
16 Open Diapason
16 Bourdon (ext.)
16 Contra Gamba (Sw.)
16 Erzähler (Ch.)
8 Octave (ext.)
8 Bourdon (ext.)
8 Gamba (Sw.)
8 Erzähler (Ch.)
4 Choral Bass
4 Night Horn
32 Contra Trombone
16 Trombone (ext.)
16 Contra Oboe (Sw.)
16 Bass Clarinet (Ch.)
8 Trombone (ext.)
8 Oboe (Sw.)
4 Oboe (Sw.)
4 Clarinet (Ch.)
MIDI on Pedal

COUPLERS
Great to Pedal 8–4
Swell to Pedal 8–4
Choir to Pedal 8–4
Swell to Great 16–8–4
Swell to Choir 16–8–4
Choir to Great 16–8–4
Choir to Swell 8
Great to Choir 8
All Swells to Swell

COMBINATION ACTION
(Peterson MSP 1000, 99 levels of memory)
Great thumb pistons 1–10
Swell thumb pistons 1–10
Choir thumb pistons 1–10
Pedal thumb pistons 1–10, duplicated by toe studs
General thumb pistons 1–18, duplicated by toe studs, 19–34 toe studs only
Next Piston—Piston Sequencer
Previous Piston—Piston Sequencer
Set Piston
General Cancel Piston

REVERSIBLES
Great to Pedal, thumb piston and toe paddle
Swell to Pedal, thumb piston and toe paddle
Choir to Pedal, thumb piston and toe paddle
Swell to Great, thumb piston and toe paddle
Choir to Great, thumb piston
Swell to Choir, thumb piston
32' Contra Bourdon, thumb piston and toe paddle
32' Contra Trombone, thumb piston and toe paddle
Sforzando, thumb piston and toe paddle
All Swells to Swell, thumb piston
Manual Transfer, thumb piston

ACCESSORIES
General Crescendo Pedal, 60 stages, one standard and three adjustable settings
Great Expression Pedal
Swell Expression Pedal
Choir Expression Pedal
MIDI In and Out jacks
Yamaha MDF–2 Sequencer