

ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH ROANOKE, VIRGINIA QUIMBY PIPE ORGANS INC. WARRENSBURG, MISSOURI



From the Builder

Although many other southwestern Virginia communities have early-American origins, the city of Roanoke was founded comparatively late. Despite this, the Episcopal Church of St. John in Roanoke has its antecedents in attempts to organize the Episcopal Church in southern rural society during the decades following the Revolutionary War, and by 1849, St. John's Church was established at Big Lick, Virginia. With the construction of the railroad in 1881 came the founding of Roanoke, and the church soon sought to move the short distance to the new town. Since 1892, the congregation has worshiped in an elegant, aurally resonant neo-Gothic structure of native limestone and sandstone on the corner of Elm Avenue and Jefferson Street.

The church's first pipe organ was a small instrument of unidentified manufacture that was installed by 1886 and subsequently moved to the new building in 1892. It was replaced in 1926 by a used residence pipe organ, also of uncertain origin. Apparently, neither was entirely successful in the fairly resonant volume of the current church, nor did either keep pace with the developing music program. In 1940, the rector declared that the installation of a new organ was more important than debt retirement, but it wasn't until his death several years later that memorial gifts provided for the installation of Aeolian-Skinner Opus 1093 of 1948, an instrument of 58 ranks, four manuals, and pedal. This substantial instrument paved the way for the continued development of the music program but fell victim to subsequent rebuilds and enlargements that were poorly conceived. The last of

these, in 1991, also proved to be mechanically deficient. Then, no less than eleven lightning strikes threatened the electromechanical components of the already compromised instrument, and it was finally on Good Friday, 2006, one appropriately stormy morning, that one last lightning strike dealt a fatal blow to the mechanism of the instrument. The church, which had long tolerated ciphers, dead notes, and sometimes silence from the organ during countless services, weddings, and funerals, now faced Easter services with no organ.

A committee was formed, and its homework was done. The late Gerre Hancock, professor of organ and sacred music at the University of Texas, was invited to serve as consultant to the organ committee. A plan soon emerged for the rehabilitation of Aeolian-Skinner Opus 1093, and several organbuilders were invited to submit proposals. According to organist David Charles Campbell, "The organ committee was thrilled when Michael Quimby arrived in town and was finishing our sentences even before arriving at the church building!" In the end, Quimby Pipe Organs of Warrensburg, Missouri, was selected to do the work, and the outcome is their Opus 66, a new four-manual, 74-rank pipe organ that makes use of a significant number of ranks from the 1948 Aeolian-Skinner. While this instrument's extant pipework was of excellent construction and was utilized in the new instrument, it was never voiced to its full potential for its chambered location. These pipes have been revoiced in order to remedy this and to work seamlessly with new pipework, which includes pipework by Quimby Pipe Organs and several ranks from Aeolian-Skinner Opus 1066 (1945), formerly of Christ Church, New Haven, Connecticut. All mechanisms, casework, and the console are new.

The resulting instrument has an identity and character of its own; inspiration is drawn from the work of Ernest Skinner and Aeolian-Skinner, and from English organbuilder T.C. Lewis, among other influences. The tonal specification, developed by Quimby Pipe Organs, organ consultant Gerre Hancock, and St. John's organist David Charles Campbell, is carefully conceived and notably avoids many of the superfluties often found in large organs. The organ is tonally diverse, yet coherent in ensemble. Every stop is intriguing and beautiful on its own, and nothing sounds unfinished; each rank is developed to full harmonic potential and richness. While this leads one to explore the individuality and color of each stop—and to use individual stops alone—the individual ranks also blend remarkably well. Every stop possesses a distinctive character; however, no stop is an individualist to the degree that it mars the ensemble. Registration thus comes easily. It is not difficult to build up a seamless crescendo with no gaps.

With regard to established organ repertoire, the instrument proves to be widely versatile: Baroque and Classic music sound transparent and lucid, the appropriate ensembles speaking together with precision; Romantic works can be interpreted with warmth, depth, and heroically registered; Modern works sound equally at home; and transcriptions can be effectively and creatively registered. Opus 66 is also an inspiring vehicle for the art of improvisation, for the elegance and convenience of the console combine with the richness and variety of tone and the sacredness of the resonant space to produce an atmosphere that is satisfying to all the senses.

The Great diapason chorus forms the backbone of the instrument, and is based on either of two 8' Open Diapasons of differing scale and character. The Pedal 16' Bourdon is duplexed to the Great, where it serves as a manual double, together with the 16' Violone. This primary chorus is contrasted with three additional choruses, each based on 8' diapasons of differing timbre and scale, in the Swell, Choir, and Antiphonal. It is significant that the balance between these choruses, also of differing timbres, is dynamically comparable, with the Great slightly dominating because of its unenclosed position in casework located in the choir of the church. This congruity in balance level between the divisions makes the art of registration user-friendly, without one division dominating disproportionately to others.

In addition, each of the four primary manual divisions contains flutes at 16', 8', and 4'; with 2' flutes being included in the Choir and Swell. There is a wide and useful variety of color between stopped, open, harmonic, and tapered flutes. Of special note is the Great 8' Doppelflute, a stopped wooden rank with two mouths on each pipe that yields a buoyant, liquid tone suitable for soaring solo melodies. By contrast, the Great 8' Harmonic Flute speaks with a silvery tone that works equally well as a solo voice and functions in a traditional role with the Great 8' foundations.

Each of the Swell, Antiphonal, and Choir divisions has a string and celeste, the latter having two. From the Choir 8' Dulciana and Unda Maris—the softest—to the Swell 8' Gamba and Gamba Celeste—the most prominent—the character of the string ranks is varied, and voicing of the individual ranks produces sounds that are distinctive and vibrant. The 16' and 8' Violone is an exceedingly beautiful, harmonically rich rank, which, in the words of James Jamison, “down the church turns to velvet.” It is borrowed to the Pedal, where it provides definition for many quieter ensembles.

The reeds, many of which were retained from Aeolian-Skinner Opus 1093, have been voiced by Eric Johnson with the particular skill and care for which Quimby Pipe Organs has come to be known. New extensions for many are constructed and voiced, so that the breaks between old and new are indiscernible. There is a reed chorus on each of the Great, Swell, and Choir divisions. The Great chorus reeds are comprised of an 8' Trumpet and 4' Clarion, with the former being extended down to 16'. The Swell reed chorus is based upon the 8' Trompette and 4' Clarion, with the 16' being provided by an extension of the 8' Oboe. The original Swell 16' Fagotto has been relocated to the Choir, where it is extended down to 32' and up to 4'. Nearly all manual chorus reeds are borrowed to the Pedal for added utility;

likewise, the Pedal Trombone is available on the Choir and Solo at 16', 8', and 4'.

The chorus reeds work equally well as solo voices and as climactic additions to the ensemble—always providing dramatic coloring in the latter case but never obliterating the flues. The instrument also possesses several tonally refined and distinctive imitative solo reeds worthy of note: the 8' English Horn and 8' Clarinet on the Choir, the Swell 8' Vox Humana, and the Antiphonal 8' Tuba Mirabilis, the crowning voice of the organ. The Solo is a floating division, comprised mostly of reeds from other divisions. It can be coupled to any of the other manual or Pedal divisions and provides for added flexibility.

The Antiphonal division occupies a chamber at the rear center of the nave, a location in common with the Antiphonal division of Aeolian-Skinner Opus 1093, and is playable from the fourth manual. It serves to assist with congregational singing, especially during processions, and also functions as an echo division, given its softer strings and flutes.

While it borrows many ranks from the manual divisions for flexibility and subtlety of nuance, the Pedal division is based upon a substantial Open Diapason at 16' and 8', a Bourdon at 32', 16', 8', and 4', a Choral Bass 4', mutations at 6²/₅' and 5¹/₃', and the Trombone at 32', 16', 8', and 4'. Together with borrowed manual ranks, these provide a generous Pedal that is capable of providing a suitable bass for any number of ensembles, as well as appropriate colors at various pitches for solos.

The electropneumatic windchests are constructed in the Blackinton style, the advantages of which are precise attack and release, tonal coherence, and efficient placement of pipework. All flues on these chests are independent and particular to their respective division, with the exception of three ranks on unit windchests. The standard Quimby schwimmer bellows serve to help regulate wind pressure in the windchests, resulting in stable wind pressure and tuning. In addition, they are designed to provide a subtle but dramatic pressure increase under full organ. Of special note are the Quimby standard two-inch swell shades, which present an astonishing, effective dynamic range for the three enclosed divisions.

The new four-manual console is constructed in the Aeolian-Skinner style, with a white oak case and walnut interior; it conveniently and elegantly provides for a user-interface that is intuitive and welcoming, and that looks and feels congruent with the sounds the instrument produces. All of the usual modern registration aids are found: multiple levels of memory, ample general and divisional pistons, reversibles, sequencer, programmable crescendo settings, MIDI, and standard couplers, among others. One noteworthy detail is the use of authentic Aeolian-Skinner light lenses in the console interior.

There are three sections of finely detailed neo-Gothic casework, also of white oak: two projecting on either side of the Choir, which house unenclosed Great and Pedal stops, and one at the rear of the nave, which forms the front of the enclosed Antiphonal division. These were designed by Terry Eason Design of Chapel Hill, North Carolina, and were constructed by QLF—Custom Pipe Organ Components of Rocky Mount, Virginia. The casework and facade pipes appear to always have been in the church, blending harmoniously with the recently restored 1892 neo-Gothic space.

St. John's Episcopal Church
Roanoke, Virginia
Quimby Pipe Organs Inc.
Opus 66
Four manuals, 74 ranks

GREAT (16 ranks) (flues, 4" wp; reeds, 7")

16 Violone
16 Bourdon (Ped.)
8 *First Diapason (1–12 new)
8 *Second Diapason (1–12 new)
8 Violone (ext.)
8 Doppelflute
8 Harmonic Flute (1–12 from 8' Doppelflute)
4 *Octave
4 Hohlflöte
2²/₃ Twelfth
2 *Fifteenth
1³/₅ Seventeenth
1¹/₃* Mixture IV
16 *Contra Trumpet (1–12 new)
8 Trumpet
4 *Clarion
Flute Tremolo
8 Tuba Mirabilis (Ant.)
Chimes (25 tubes from Ant.)
Bells (one eight-bell in the main organ, one eight-bell in the Ant.)
Great to Great 16
Great Unison Off
Great to Great 4
Solo on Great
MIDI on Great

SWELL (21 ranks) (flues, 5" wp; reeds, 7")

16 Gedeckt
8 *Principal
8 Chimney Flute (ext.)
8 *Gamba
8 *Gamba Celeste
4 *Octave
4 *Nachthorn
2²/₃* Nazard
2 *Blockflöte
1³/₅* Tierce
2 Mixture V
1 Scharf III
16 *Contra Oboe (1–12 new)
8 *Trompette
8 Oboe (ext.)
8 *Vox Humana
4 *Clarion
Tremolo
Swell to Swell 16
Swell Unison Off
Swell to Swell 4
Solo on Swell
MIDI on Swell

CHOIR (19 ranks) (flues, 5" wp; reeds, 6")

16 *Flûte conique
8 *Geigen Principal
8 Stopped Flute
8 Flûte conique (ext.)
8 *Viola
8 Viola Celeste
8 *Dulciana
8 *Unda Maris (TC)
4 *Geigen Octave
4 *Harmonic Flute
4 *Stopped Flute
2 Fifteenth (from Ch. Mixture)
2 Piccolo
1¹/₃ Larigot
2 *Mixture IV
32 *Contra Fagotto (1–12 new)
16 Fagotto (ext.)
8 Fagotto (ext.)
8 *Clarinet
8 *English Horn
4 Fagotto (ext.)
Tremolo
8 Tuba Mirabilis (Ant.)
16 Trombone (Ped.)
8 Tromba (Ped.)
4 Tromba Clarion (Ped.)
Choir to Choir 16
Choir Unison Off
Choir to Choir 4
Solo on Choir
MIDI on Choir

ANTI-PHONAL (11 ranks) (flues and reed, 5" wp; Tuba Mirabilis, 15" wp)

16 Lieblich Gedeckt (TC)
8 Diapason
8 Gedeckt
8 *Echo Viole
8 *Echo Viole Celeste
4 Octave
4 *Koppelflöte
2²/₃ Twelfth
2 Fifteenth (Ch.)
8 Trumpet
8 Tuba Mirabilis
Antiphonal to Antiphonal 16
Antiphonal Unison Off
Antiphonal to Antiphonal 4
Solo on Antiphonal
Harp (Deagan bars, electropneumatic action)
Celesta
MIDI on Antiphonal

Quimby Pipe Organs Opus 66 is a synthesis—a successful combination of the old Aeolian-Skinner pipework with new pipework. Conceptually, it is also a synthesis of the tonal ideals from many influences, all brought together as a coherent instrument under a singular vision. While the inspirations are varied, Opus 66 is, in its own right, a modern American organ, descriptive of its own time and place and sensitively responding to the de-

mands that are placed on it week by week. What organ consultant Gerre Hancock pronounced upon its completion is true: "The artistic expertise and astonishing craftsmanship of Michael Quimby . . . have been a great joy to behold. . . . Generations to come both here in Roanoke and elsewhere will take joy in this wonderful work." Indeed they are, and indeed they will.

T. DANIEL HANCOCK

ANTIPHONAL PEDAL (1 rank) (5" wp)

- 32 Resultant (Ant. Ped.)
- 16 Bourdon
- 8 Bourdon

SOLO

- 8 Bourdon (Ped.)
- 8 Gedeckt (Sw.)
- 8 Trumpet (Gt.)
- 8 Trompette (Sw.)
- 8 Oboe (Sw.)
- 8 English Horn (Ch.)
- 8 Clarinet (Ch.)
- 8 Fagotto (Ch.)
- 16 Tuba Mirabilis (TC) (Ant.)
- 16 Trombone (Ped.)
- 8 Tuba Mirabilis (Ant.)
- 8 Tromba (Ped.)
- 4 Tuba Clarion (Ant.)
- 4 Tromba Clarion (Ped.)
- Harp (Ant.)
- Celesta (Ant.)

PEDAL (6 ranks) (flues, 5" wp; reeds, 7")

- 32 Contra Bourdon (1-5 Resultant)
- 16 Open Diapason
- 16 Violone (Gt.)
- 16 Bourdon (ext.)
- 16 Flûte conique (Ch.)
- 16 Gedeckt (Sw.)
- 10½ Gross Quinte (Ch. Flûte conique)
- 8 Octave (ext.)
- 8 Violone (Gt.)
- 8 Bourdon (ext.)
- 8 Flûte conique (Ch.)
- 6½ Gross Tierce
- 5½ *Quinte
- 4 *Choral Bass
- 4 Bourdon (ext.)
- 3½ Tierce (ext.)
- 5½ Mixture IV
- 32 Theorb de Cornet
- 32 *Contra Trombone (1-12, 57-97 new)
- 32 Contra Fagotto (Ch.)
- 16 Trombone (ext.)
- 16 Contra Trumpet (Gt.)
- 16 Contra Oboe (Sw.)
- 16 Fagotto (Ch.)
- 8 Trombone (ext.)
- 8 Trumpet (Gt.)
- 8 Oboe (Sw.)
- 8 Fagotto (Ch.)
- 4 Trombone Clarion (ext.)
- 4 Clarion (Gt. 8' Trumpet)
- 4 Oboe (Sw.)
- Solo on Pedal
- MIDI on Pedal

* ranks retained from Aeolian-Skinner Opus 1093

COUPLERS

- Great to Pedal 8, 4
- Swell to Pedal 8, 4
- Choir to Pedal 8, 4
- Antiphonal to Pedal 8, 4
- Swell to Great 16, 8, 4
- Choir to Great 16, 8, 4
- Antiphonal to Great 16, 8, 4

- Choir to Swell 8
- Antiphonal to Swell 16, 8, 4
- Great to Choir 8
- Swell to Choir 16, 8, 4
- Antiphonal to Choir 16, 8, 4
- Pedal to Choir 8
- All Swells to Swell
- Manual Transfer



Antiphonal division

COMBINATION ACTION

- Peterson ICS-4000 (256 levels of memory)
- Great thumb pistons 1-10, Cancel
- Swell thumb pistons 1-10, Cancel
- Choir thumb pistons 1-10, Cancel
- Antiphonal thumb pistons 1-10, Cancel
- Solo thumb pistons 1-10, Cancel
- Pedal thumb pistons 1-5 thumb pistons and 1-5 toe studs
- General pistons 1-21 (thumb) (22-40 only on toe studs)

- Next piston sequencer
- Previous piston sequencer
- Set piston
- General cancel piston
- Toe studs in Aeolian-Skinner style

CRESCENDO AND EXPRESSION PEDALS

- General crescendo pedal (60 positions, three adjustable; one standard)
- Swell expression pedal
- Choir expression pedal
- Antiphonal expression pedal

REVERSIBLES

- Great to Pedal (thumb and toe paddle)
- Swell to Pedal (thumb and toe paddle)
- Choir to Pedal (thumb and toe paddle)
- Antiphonal to Pedal (thumb and toe paddle)
- Swell to Great (thumb and toe paddle)
- Choir to Great (thumb)
- Antiphonal to Great (thumb and toe paddle)
- Swell to Choir (thumb)
- 32' Contra Bourdon (thumb and toe paddle)
- 32' Trombone (thumb and toe paddle)
- 32' Fagotto (thumb and toe paddle)
- Sforzando (thumb and toe paddle)
- All Swells to Swell (thumb)
- Reed/Mixture vents (on/off thumb and toe paddle)
- Manual transfer (thumb)

Toe paddles in Aeolian-Skinner style

- MIDI
- Peterson ICS-4000

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