

PREFACE

The subject of this study is a legacy of which I find myself the custodian, a century-and-a-half of music, musicians and instruments associated with three successive Roman Catholic cathedrals in Omaha, Nebraska. Each chapter in this history has had its share of distinctive elements and distinguished characters, some memorialized here for the first time. It is only natural, however, that the most recent installment of this story should command a primary place in the telling of the tale: the creation of a landmark pipe organ that has put the Archdiocese of Omaha and its Mother Church, Saint Cecilia Cathedral, on the world map of musical culture. Freshness of memory and ready accessibility of most of the relevant primary sources make this moment ripe for such an undertaking.

As a scholarly tract, this document is perhaps unusual in that I have employed the voice of the first person in many instances, especially in those sections pertaining to the history of Martin Pasi's Opus 14. I hardly could have avoided this perspective without making a secret of my intimate involvement with the project or feigning an impossible degree of detachment and objectivity. I nevertheless have endeavored to "tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth," limiting my version of that truth to instances where corroborating evidence could be supplied. I have tried to

balance germane references to personal triumphs with regrettable personal failures that are nonetheless part of the truth.

I do not mean to suggest that personal experience and first-person perspective have no place in the determination of the “fact” of art. On the contrary, a work of art is as much “made” through the receptive acts of contemplation and interpretation as it is through the assertive deeds of manipulating and arranging matter. It is possible, nevertheless, to objectify one’s own thoughts and experiences, especially in an historical narrative, and this is what I have attempted to do in the hope of attaining credibility with the reader. At the very least, I hope this account will be a helpful resource to anyone who wishes to study this instrument in the future, balancing the advantage of their historical perspective with that of my temporal proximity to the organ’s creation.

Upon completion of this project I extend gratitude to many people who through the years have supported, encouraged, prodded and cajoled me toward this end: to my parents, Norbert and Sharon Vogt, and my sister, Carla, who all made many sacrifices over the years for the sake of my mysterious talents and budding obsessions; to the teachers of my childhood and youth, who planted in me the seeds of inquiry; to my undergraduate organ teachers, Dr. Robert Thompson and Dr. John Ferguson; to my mentors and friends at the University of Notre Dame, Dr. Craig Cramer, Dr. Gail Walton, Dr. Calvin Bower and Mr. David Boe, who taught me and others as though they were raising up future colleagues.

I offer thanks to the esteemed members of my graduate committee at the University of Kansas: to Dr. William Keel, whose interest in me and this project extended well beyond his duty to the Graduate School; to Dr. Michael Bauer, who inspires with an insatiable thirst for knowledge, indefatigable enthusiasm for sharing it, and who has made many professional and personal sacrifices from which I and this project have benefited; to Dr. James Higdon, without whose example of vision and leadership I couldn't have imagined undertaking an organ project of such magnitude; to Dr. Deron McGee, who through his teaching and scholarship engendered a quantum leap in my own critical faculties; and to Dr. Paul Laird, who carefully read and advised the writing of this document, urging clarity here, eradicating grandiloquence there—for this much-needed help and for his own example of excellence in teaching and scholarship. I also gratefully acknowledge the financial support I received during my studies at the University of Kansas from scholarship funds provided by Polly Bales and Dorothy Leidig.

I convey thanks to my superiors, colleagues and friends associated with Saint Cecilia Cathedral in Omaha, Nebraska: to Fr. Joseph Wray and Fr. Ronald Noecker, whose support in the early days of the organ project was critical to its success; to Br. William Woeger, F.S.C., whose vision, creativity, resourcefulness, and steadfastness made the unthinkable possible; to Archbishop Elden Francis Curtiss, the piano-playing prelate who thought “the embodiment of the harmony” was a good-enough reason to commission a dual-temperament organ; and to Fr. Michael Gutsell, who as chancellor of the Archdiocese of Omaha and moderator of the curia—and now as

pastor of Saint Cecilia Cathedral—has supported my work at every turn, and who continually challenges me to clearer thinking, nobler motivation, and more disciplined expression. To Dr. Marie Rubis Bauer—collaborator and partner—who believed in the idea of a dual-tempered cathedral organ as soon as it was conceived and long before her direct association with it, and who now presides at the organ with great love and empathy for it, I extend heartfelt appreciation and admiration.

Many professional colleagues throughout the world have supported and contributed in some way to the cathedral organ project and its documentation and are directly or indirectly acknowledged in the body of this study. Thanks are due especially to Robert Bates, Craig Cramer, David Dahl, Quentin Faulkner, Herbert Huestis and Kristian Wegscheider, among many others.

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To Frank and Helen Matthews I give thanks for a most amazing gift to Saint Cecilia Cathedral and an opportunity of a lifetime for me. To Martin Pasi—words utterly fail to convey gratitude that I can only repay with lifelong friendship.

Finally, to my wife Susan and our children Grace Sophia (age ten), Anna Magdalena (age four), and Andrew Lawrence (age two), who all came into my life after this project was begun, I pledge a new beginning. I am resolved to never again hear the voice of a child mimicking the words of Rex Harrison as Pope Julius II, “When will you make an end?” and having to reply as did Charlton Heston’s Michelangelo, “When I am finished.”¹ To Susan and our children I dedicate this work.

¹ Irving Stone, *The Agony and the Ecstasy*, motion picture (1965).