

RECORD-BREAKING ORGAN BID

The Spreckels organ in Balboa Park, San Diego



IN AN OUTBREAK OF TRANSCONTINENTAL one-upmanship, the Spreckels Organ Society (SOS), which operates the outdoor organ in Balboa Park, San Diego CA, is using the park's 2015 Centennial Celebration as a goal to regain the title of World's Largest Outdoor Pipe Organ – the record was lost in the 1980s when the Hero Organ in Kufstein, Austria was expanded to 4,948 pipes, leaving its Californian rival trailing at only 4,518 pipes, still enough to claim the title of America's largest outdoor instrument.

The Society is over halfway towards raising the \$223,000 required to make the necessary enlargements to the instrument. But size isn't everything, according to SOS president George Hardy, who told *C&O*, 'The Spreckels Organ was first played on New Year's Eve 1915; expanding it will not only return the instrument to its original classification as "the world's largest outdoor pipe organ", but it will broaden and deepen the orchestral and theatrical voices of the organ, thereby increasing its musical range and repertory. Our intent is to celebrate the birthday of the Spreckels Organ by making it, once again, "The World's Organ", as its original sponsors intended.' The instrument was originally gifted by John D. and Adolf Spreckels, of the Spreckels sugar family; afternoon organ concerts are now the responsibility of 'the USA's first woman civic organist', Dr Carol Williams – guest artists perform every Sunday and on Monday evenings during the Summer International Organ Festival.

HAMPTON COURT BACK IN ACTION

The Chapel Royal at Hampton Court Palace was packed on 28 November to hear James O'Donnell giving the inaugural recital on the 1712 Shrider-Hill organ after its overhaul by Harrison & Harrison. O'Donnell's programme included music by three composers associated with the Chapel Royal in the 1700s: Greene, Boyce and Handel (Organ Concerto in F, op.4 no.5), as well as works by J.S. Bach, Mendelssohn and his contemporary J.P.E. Hartmann, and from the 20th century, Frank Bridge's *Adagio in E* and Maurice Duruflé's *Prelude & Fugue on the name of Alain*, with a seasonal encore of Bach's *Wachet auf*.



O'Donnell: 'Exactly the right sounds'

Commenting on the organ's renewed vitality, O'Donnell said: 'I am delighted to have been asked to give the inaugural concert on this beautifully restored instrument. It is particularly rewarding to be able to play music dating from the early 18th century on pipes from the 1712 instrument, giving exactly the right sounds.'

The organ was commissioned in 1710 and completed in 1712 by Christopher Shrider. Over 300 years later, it still contains eleven ranks of pipes from that organ. The case may well have been by master carver Grinling Gibbons, whose work can be found elsewhere at Hampton Court Palace. The organ was enlarged on several occasions between 1840 to 1901 by William Hill and Son; other firms carried out work in 1957, 1972 and 1993. The most recent overhaul by Harrison & Harrison aimed to restore the character of the Shrider-Hill organ by reducing its size and retrieving the tonal character of the instrument. In addition, a number of long-standing technical issues, both at the console and throughout the organ, were rectified.

Director of music Carl Jackson thanked The Choral Foundation for raising the £210,000 cost of the overhaul, and also Historic Royal Palaces for its support. Proceeds from the concert go to The Choral Foundation, The Chapel Royal, Hampton Court Palace, to provide musical training for the choristers and to ensure the continuation of the 500-year-old musical heritage of Hampton Court Palace. www.chapelroyal.org/choralfoundation.html

www.choirandorgan.com

IN BRIEF



ST PAUL'S, CRAIG-Y-DON

A church in Llandudno, North Wales, is appealing to local people to sponsor 1,767 organ pipes to meet the £150,000 cost of its organ restoration.

The **1910 William Hill organ** of St Paul's Church, Craig-y-Don is one of only two in the Llandudno area which is grade II listed by the British Institute of Organ Studies. The Revd Bob Griffiths, Rector of St Paul's, told *C&O*, 'There's a long history of people in the community of Craig-y-Don rallying round to help with the organ here. It was originally funded by a local woman who thought that the church needed a much grander instrument than the one it had when it was first built.' Choral director Deborah Haigh-Roberts added: 'The organ has been described by experts as tonally quite superb. It's particularly special because it remains largely unaltered since it was built.' When the refurbishment is complete a list of sponsors' names will be sealed inside the organ in a time capsule for future generations. www.churchorganfund.co.uk

City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra (CBSO) choral director **Simon Halsey** has clocked up 30 years in post. As a reward for his service, which began in 1983, Halsey is being enrolled in the orchestra's 'Hall of Fame'; a portrait of him will be hung in the orchestra's Berkley Street offices – an honour reserved for the orchestra's most renowned members since it was founded in 1920.

Cathedral Press, a Welsh publishing business with a reputation for the scholarly publication of sacred music editions, has become an imprint of RSCM Press. Cathedral Press publications of sacred music from the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries will now be available to order online through the RSCM's Music Direct website www.rscmshop.com/cathedral-press.html.

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