

# PEORIA CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN GUILD OF ORGANISTS

---

May/June 2015

## PLEASE SUBSCRIBE TO OUR WEB PAGE

You can now subscribe to [www.agopeoria.org](http://www.agopeoria.org). To get our news and postings directly in your inbox when they are posted on our website, please visit [www.agopeoria.org](http://www.agopeoria.org) and look for the subscription box. Please send any news and items of interest including upcoming concerts, especially if they feature the organ, to us at [agopeoria@gmail.com](mailto:agopeoria@gmail.com) so that we can inform our membership and friends.

## PEORIA BACH FESTIVAL 2015

Join the Peoria Bach Festival from May 31-June 7 for another week of celebrating the music, art, and faith of Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750). Altogether there will be eight concerts, several free lectures, two festival worship services, and an event for children. For details please visit [www.peoriabachfestival.org](http://www.peoriabachfestival.org) or call (309) 676-4609.

## MATTHEW DIRST OPENS PEORIA BACH FESTIVAL 2015 WITH CONCERT AT 3:30 P.M., SUNDAY, MAY 31

Award winning organist and harpsichordist and now acclaimed musicologist Matthew Dirst returns to Central Illinois to present the opening concert of the Peoria Bach Festival 2015 at 3:30 p.m. on Sunday, May 31 at Trinity Lutheran Church, 135 NE Randolph Ave., Peoria. Co-sponsored by the Peoria AGO and the Peoria Bach Festival, the concert will include Bach's Prelude and Fugue in Eb Major (St. Anne) and several excerpts from the Art of the Fugue. It will also include works by organists influenced by Bach: a trio by Hugo Distler, a concerto by Christian Friedrich Ruppe, *Variations sur un thème de Clément Janequin* by Jehan Alain, and Anton Heiller's *In festo corporis Christi*.



A native of Morton, Matthew is Professor of Music at the Moores School of Music, University of Houston, where he teaches courses in music history and performance practice. He is also Founder and Artistic Director of Ars Lyrica Houston, a Grammy-nominated ensemble that specializes in Baroque chamber and dramatic works (see [www.arslyricahouston.org](http://www.arslyricahouston.org)), and serves as organist at St Philip Presbyterian Church in Houston.

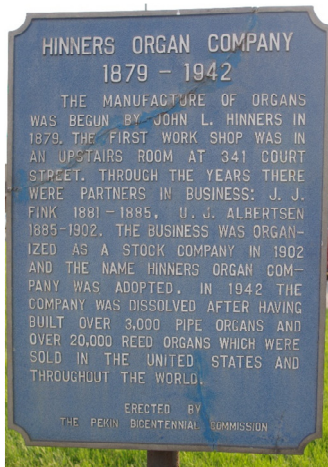
The first American to win major international prizes in both organ and harpsichord including the National Young Artists Competition of the American Guild of Organists (1990) and the inaugural Warsaw International Harpsichord Competition (1993), his degrees include a PhD in musicology from Stanford University and the *prix de virtuosité* in both organ and harpsichord from the French National Conservatory, where he spent two years as a Fulbright scholar. Widely admired for his stylish playing and conducting of Baroque music, the *Dallas Morning News* recently hailed his “crisp but expressive direction” of the Monteverdi 1610 Vespers, which “yielded impressive precision, but also rhythmic buoyancy and rhetorical freedom.” His recordings include solo organ and harpsichord discs on the Centaur label and numerous CDs with Ars Lyrica Houston on the Naxos and Sono Luminus labels. In 2011 he was nominated for a Grammy Award for his

conducting of the world première recording of Johann Adolf Hasse's *Marc'Antonio e Cleopatra*, which features 2013 Cardiff Singer of the World Jamie Barton. In addition to his performing career, Dirst is a noted Bach scholar. His book *Engaging Bach: The Keyboard Legacy from Marpurg to Mendelssohn* was published in 2012 by Cambridge University Press. We welcome Matthew back to Central Illinois

Trinity Lutheran Church  
135 NE Randolph Ave. • Peoria, IL 61606 • 309-696-4797  
Admission: \$12 Adults / \$10 Senior Citizens / Children and Students free

## PRESERVING A LOCAL TREASURE

By Rachel Keehner



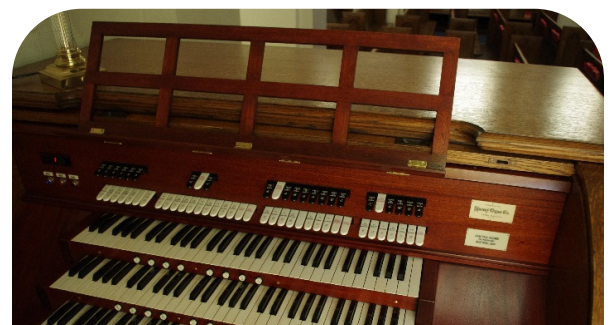
*Marker near where the Hinners factory was located; the building no longer exists and the site is now part of a city park*

A pipe organ does not have to be a grand concert instrument to hold a place of significance, especially in regard to local history. This holds true for the three manual Hinners pipe organ at St. John's Lutheran Church in Pekin, which was recently rebuilt and restored by John-Paul Buzard Pipe Organ Builders of Champaign, Illinois. Although Pekin was home to the Hinners Pipe Organ Company and the location of several of their organs, the pipe organ at St. John's is said to be the only working Hinners left in the city.

In 1927, the congregation of St. John's Lutheran dedicated not only their current church building, but also the three manual Hinners pipe organ that still resides there and is used today. Although the Hinners company had hand-crafted many different organs throughout the U.S. and also overseas, building a pipe organ for St. John's was seen as a special project and opportunity. Not only was the Hinners factory only blocks from the church, but records indicate that several Hinners employees were members of the congregation. While not a particularly large organ, it functioned well for congregational use and the members of St. John's were quite pleased with it. Others also found it to be a fine and well-built instrument, including Edward Rechlin, an "eminent concert organist" and Bach interpreter, who wrote a brief letter to Hinners giving high compliments of the instrument after giving two recitals at St. John's. Regardless of how this organ is perceived today, it was seen as a fine instrument of good quality for the time and the circumstances.

However, the general wear on the instrument in the following decades and certain decisions left the organ in need of extensive repairs and restoration. It appears that the only time the organ has been re-built was in the 1960s, and it was during this time that the original console was discarded and additional couplers and a "floating" Positiv division were added. Unfortunately, the added stops from the Positiv division were out of place with the organ's original tonality, and it was discovered that the additional stops and couplers overtaxed the organ's current wind system. The negative effects of these changes, in addition to a large number of "inconsistent" or "dead" notes on various stops and major air leaks in the wind system, furthered the need for thorough work on the organ. Occasional mechanical problems with the stop controls in the console, and possibly within the organ chambers as well, also caused some unwanted surprises while practicing and during services.

Fortunately the need for extensive work on the organ was already under discussion, so starting this major project was mainly a matter of planning and financial decisions. I was asked to gather some information about a few organ builders that could provide an organ evaluation and potentially complete the project along with continuing to maintain the instrument. Based on this information and their own findings, the church trustees contacted three organ building companies and had evaluations of the organ completed in late 2013 and into 2014. In spring of 2014 the church trustees decided to



*The new organ console, located in the right transept, utilizes a reconfigured 1929 Hinners console acquired by Buzard from a Chicago church.*

present the evaluation and proposal from Buzard to the congregation. By late June a contract with Buzard was finalized with plans for work to begin in August.

A team from Buzard spent the entire first full week of August removing, packing, and taking all the components of the organ (except the organ blower) back to Champaign where most of the work would be completed. Along with the general task of rebuilding the organ, a 1929 Hinners console acquired by Buzard was renovated for use at St. John's. In addition, the pipe organ was restored to its original specifications, removing the additional stops and couplers that were added in the 1960s. During this time the church trustees had some necessary electrical work related to the organ completed within the church and also cleaned, repainted, and installed proper lighting inside the organ chambers. Re-installation, voicing and tuning of the organ began in mid-November and was completed just in time for Christmas, although one feature of the instrument--a "harp"--was still being rebuilt and would not be reinstalled until later.



The organ was first used for services again on Christmas Eve, with specific mention made in regard to its rededication during services the following Sunday. A special Epiphany service held at St. John's on January 11th also provided the opportunity for others from the community and surrounding areas to come and hear the organ as well as sing several Epiphany hymns together. The congregation also received a little surprise on Easter Sunday: the harp, which was finally reinstalled in late February, received its "debut" during the prelude that morning.

Response regarding this extensive project is both positive and enthusiastic. Parishioners at St. John's had many questions to ask, interest in each step of this process, anticipation in finally having the organ back again, and great satisfaction (and some surprise) in the final result. Having an organ restored is a major project, but the result makes the expense worthwhile and helps to ensure the instrument's further use and the ability for its musical sounds to be enjoyed by many for years to come.



*Name plates on the organ console.*

---

*“Organ playing is the manifestation of a will filled with  
the vision of eternity.” – Charles Marie Widor*

---

The organ chambers at St. John's Lutheran Church, Pekin.



*On this organ the pipes are housed in two chambers at the front of the church with openings into the nave and the chancel. Pipes for the Great, Choir, and Pedal divisions are in the left chamber. Pipes for the Swell are located in the right chamber along with the harp.*

## Contact Us

### Peoria AGO

PO Box 1072

Peoria, IL 61653

(309) 696-4797

[agopeoria@gmail.com](mailto:agopeoria@gmail.com)

[www.agopeoria.org](http://www.agopeoria.org)

## DID YOU KNOW?

There are over 5,200 individual parts to the harp on the organ that Buzard Pipe Organ Builders rebuilt for St. John's Lutheran Church in Pekin, Illinois! For a video of the harp in action, visit the Buzard Organ Builders Facebook page. The video is of a Haydn "Flötenuhrstücke" (flute clock) Presto and since posted has received 3,418 views.

## COMING NEXT SEASON – "FROM SEA TO SHINING SEA"

*From Sea to Shining Sea* is a program that features some of the most-beloved American concert organ works and a narration that encompasses how American history interacted with the development of the organ. A multi-media concert, it includes stunning visuals as well as a live video feed so every audience member can see how the instrument is played with the amazing coordination of feet, hands, and body to produce music filled with color and imagination. With this program Dr. Jeannine Jordan, organist and David Jordan, media artist, share the fascinating story of how the organ developed in America from its roots in Europe to becoming the premiere social instrument in America.

Watch for more details or visit [www.fromseatoshiningsea.net](http://www.fromseatoshiningsea.net).

Please send any news items and concert announcements to [agopeoria@gmail.com](mailto:agopeoria@gmail.com).

---

## PEORIA AGO

PO Box 1072

Peoria, IL 61653