



San Marino couple honored by church

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SAN MARINO - St. Edmund's Episcopal Church honored San Marino residents Robert and Donna Packer with the Rector's Cross Award, given each year to persons who have served the parish in a particular distinction throughout the year.

The lapel pin cross given to Robert Packer, managing shareholder at LaFollette, Johnson, DeHaas, Fesler & Ames in downtown Los Angeles, and the pendant given to Donna Packer were adorned with a white gold crown set against a golden Maltese cross, one of St. Edmund's parish's symbols.

"Bob and Donna have given themselves indefatigably in service to St. Edmund's in a variety of capacities. Both have served on the Vestry, and Donna seems always to be one of the center-field players in the organization of fundraising events and parish celebrations. She is an active member of the Altar Guild and seems always and everywhere engaged," said The Reverend George Woodward, rector of St. Edmund's.

"Bob Packer has for years worked for the renovation of our Aeolian-Skinner organ and has nearly single-handedly shepherded that dream to the reality it is now becoming. They are both such essential members of our parish, and cherished by all."

Taking the reins on St. Edmund's restoration of its Aeolian-Skinner Opus Number 1323, or a pipe organ, Robert Packer's mission is to restore significant musical and historical value to an instrument that can serve San Gabriel Valley and Greater Los Angeles residents well into the 21st century. He continues to oversee the capital campaign, Restoring the Heart of Music, which is in need of \$300,000 for the restoration.

"Since the completion of the renovation of the church and the realization of the dramatically improved acoustics, an entirely new conception of a serious organ restoration and enhancement project began to develop so as to fully reveal the unexploited potential of what we already had in place - that is, possibly the finest pipe organ in the San Gabriel Valley," said Packer, who expects the church to be a significant intimate venue for the performance of organ, chamber, choral, and orchestral music.

The Oregonian

Music review Church's new organ shows off its pipes, all 6,700 of them

Region's largest - Debut concert after renovation features wide range of works
Wednesday, April 23, 2008

JAMES McQUILLEN

"The king of instruments" is the superlative long applied to the organ, but the Mary L. Collins pipe organ at Portland's First United Methodist Church in Goose Hollow lays claim to a few more. It's the largest in the Northwest and, according to the church, it's the most comprehensive instrument ever installed in a church and the most technically advanced organ in the world.

Silent for a year and half while it was meticulously rebuilt and technologically updated, it was reintroduced Sunday afternoon by organist Jonas Nordwall before an enthusiastic overflow crowd of about 1,000 listeners.

Some numbers: The organ boasts 6,700 pipes in 107 ranks, with internal and external bell carillons, chimes, xylophone, glockenspiel and celesta. The grand console includes 322 stop tabs, 124 thumb pistons, four manuals, a full pedalboard and 37 toe pistons. Among the high-tech features are customized musical instrument digital interface and digital recording and playback systems, with capabilities for 999 organists to program 99 sets of stop specifications each. Bear in mind that this list of features is far from complete.

Purists may object that it lacks the focused and relatively simple elegance of the city's most renowned organs, such as the Rosales Opus 11 at Trinity Episcopal Cathedral and the handsome instrument at Holy Rosary built by Portland's own Bond Organ Builders. But that seems beside the point. This is a Swiss Army

knife of organs, and "Sunday's Grand Fanfare Dedication Concert" was intended to show all that it could do, with a little help from the church's fine choir.

I'm not sure that Nordwall literally pulled out all the stops -- or depressed all the tabs, this instrument's controls -- but his program brought the metaphor to mind. Beginning with Richard Wagner's prelude to Act III of the opera "Lohengrin" and including bravura pieces by Dietrich Buxtehude, Johann Sebastian Bach and Cesar Franck, among others, it was a blockbuster just short of the riotous arena shows that Virgil Fox used to play in the 1970s.

Nordwall even went so far as to demonstrate how he could add a rhythm track and other synthesized effects in an adaptation of a beloved Bach chorale he retitled "Sheep and Lambs May Safely Groove." It was sort of like what you could do with the family Wurlitzer in your basement rec room 30 years ago, if your basement could seat 1,000 people under a soaring knotty fir ceiling.

<http://www.oregonlive.com/music/oregonian/index.ssf?/base/entertainment/120890850948840.xml&coll=7>

World-class organ virtuoso to perform at St. Olaf

St. Olaf College News, Northfield, MN

By Lyndel Owens '10
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Bradley Welch has turned his childhood intrigue with the organ into a talent that led *The American Organist* to describe him as a "world-class virtuoso." He will showcase his musical skills in an organ performance at St. Olaf College on Tuesday, Feb. 26.

The organ recital will begin at 7:30 p.m. in Boe Memorial Chapel. It is free and open to the public. Parking is limited, however, so guests are advised to arrive early.

Known for his engaging performances, [Welch](#) will play a diverse range of pieces in his 65-minute recital. The 31-year-old Knoxville, Tenn., native will begin with noted church musician Leo Sowerby's "Pageant," a showpiece played only with the organists' feet. His lineup also includes Virgil Fox's arrangement of "Come, Sweetest Death," a work that Welch cites as an early inspiration and calls a "truly a transcendent piece of music."



Welch

Welch became "hooked" on the organ at age nine after hearing a church organist play during a field trip. Soon after he began studying piano, which led to organ lessons when he was 13. His fascination with the instrument has remained consistently strong throughout the years.

"I enjoy the organ for so many reasons: the huge variety of color in different sounds, the enormous dynamic range, the ability for one person to control so much power, yet with finesse and expressiveness, and also the fact that it is an impressive instrument to watch someone play," he says.

Welch earned a bachelor of music degree from Baylor University. He continued his music education at Yale University, where he earned the master of music degree in organ performance, the artist diploma, the master of musical arts degree and the doctor of musical arts degree. While at Yale, Welch received several prestigious awards, including the Robert Baker Prize, which is given to an incoming organ student who is deemed to be in the top 1-2 percent of the nation's young organists.

He has also won a number of organ competitions, including the Dallas International Organ Competition. Welch was a featured artist at three regional conventions of The American Guild of Organists, and he made his European debut in France performing in the Chartres Festival.

He is the artist-in-residence at Highland Park United Methodist Church in Dallas, Texas.