ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH BALTIMORE, MARYLAND PATRICK J. MURPHY & ASSOCIATES INC. STOWE, PENNSYLVANIA

Zion Lutheran Church of the City of Baltimore is located directly across the square from City Hall, just a short walk from the celebrated Inner Harbor. This historic German congregation was founded in 1755 and obtained its first instrument from the celebrated Pennsylvania organbuilder David Tannenberg, who was paid £375, or $600 in "Pennsylvanisch money"—roughly three times the pastor's annual salary. The original receipt survives today. Regrettably, the Tannenberg instrument was lost to a fire in March 1840 and was replaced with a Henry Knauff instrument of two manuals and 30 stops, which was rebuilt in 1924 by M.P. Möller.

PJM's signature low-profile console

In 1959, a new Möller of three manuals and 29 ranks was installed in the newly built west gallery chambers. Organist-choirmaster John Heizer writes,

> By 2005, the instrument had become almost unplayable after years of failing leather, the result of water damage from roof leaks. There were several attempts to get an organ project under way, but a stumbling block always reared its head. Nevertheless, I continued discussions with several builders and finally found Patrick J. Murphy & Associates, a small company where everyone was involved in the process of building the instrument, from the start of the project to the final installation. After a group of parish members and I visited the workshop and some of Murphy's local instruments, we were impressed with the workmanship and quality of sound. As one committee member said, "The entire staff showed such concern and love about the quality of their work."

Finally, in 2009, the church council requested that its organ restoration task force review options for the repair or replacement of Zion's 1959 Möller organ. They recognized that the dollar amounts for an organ of any kind were likely to produce a "sticker-shock" reaction. The committee considered several objective factors other than price alone, including worship and music requirements, maintenance requirements, legacy for the future, investment value, and vendor reliability. However, it wasn't until 2012 that the organ contract was signed, after a lengthy funding process that had started in the early 2000s. Heizer noted,"This may have been one of the longest organ projects in history, but Murphy & Associates were most patient with Zion as the church continued to research and raise funds for the project."

The ten years of fundraising for this instrument fell within a period of drastic and extremely rapid change in the organbuilding marketplace. Well into the final decade of the 20th century, it was assumed that almost every worship space would house an organ of some sort, and a completely new pipe organ was the norm. Even those builders who incorporated some tonal material from a previous instrument did so mainly as a sentimental gesture rather than for artistic merit.

By the time Zion signed a contract with our firm in 2012, the organ world looked out at a far different landscape. Faith communities now use a huge variety of worship styles, only some of which find organ music suitable. Historic awareness, economic realities, and a deeper understanding of the connection between natural resources and sustainability of the planet, have taught us to listen carefully and think twice before routinely filling up our landfills with quality pipework that through imaginative and skillful repurposing can continue to serve with artistic integrity.

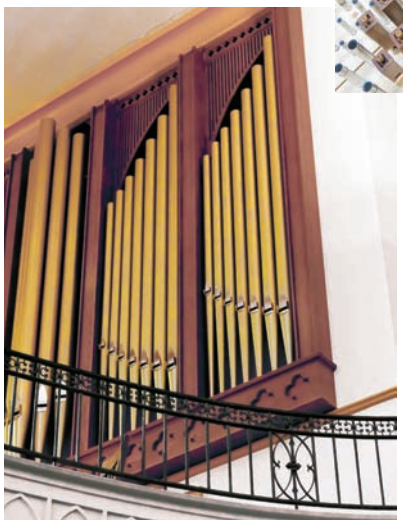
Turning that idealism into pragmatic reality, however, involves far more than simply collecting random sets of pipes from some defunct organ and reinstalling them in another location. There are many projects where reusing any existing pipework is clearly not an appropriate choice. Some of you reading this article may find yourselves in a similar situation of considering options of replacing, rebuilding, or repairing an ailing instrument. So, it may be a helpful exercise to present a rather candid view of how we go about deciding what to keep, what to replace, and what to reuse but in a totally different guise.

Our most important first step in any project is listening to our clients. Communication is critical to the collaborative process that insures, at completion, an instrument that is uniquely suited to the needs of that congregation for years to come. It begins at the conception of a new instrument and continues throughout the project.

Finding words to accurately communicate an aural concept from one mind to another can be a daunting if not impossible task, and some organists are intimidated at the attempt. So we frequently ask our clients instead to talk in terms of repertoire. What anthems do they need to accompany effectively? What organ piece or pieces do they dream of being able to play? What are the congregation's best-loved hymns? How often does the organ need to lead a "full" congregation, and what is a "normal" congregation the rest of the time? Is the organ used with other instruments: piano, handbells, brass, or strings? It is this conversation that we find most helpful in determining how to turn a client's dream into a successful reality.

Choir pipework

This collaborative process reinforces the notion that selecting an organbuilder should be based as much on trust and the comfort level between both parties, as it is on competency. A client must trust that the organbuilder is committed to listening to the needs of the congregation and will use that communication, coupled with his skill and experience, to tailor a pragmatic solution (the perfect instrument) to the unique circumstances of this particular client. Out of that continuing dialogue, a specification begins to take shape that will produce the desired sound within the real-world context of available space and acoustics. It is important to acknowledge here that every organ project, large or small, will be affected by financial considerations. The wise client, however, will first concentrate on clearly defining and producing the desired musical result, and only then look for ways to reconcile any financial disparities.



Case detail

Large 16′ Pedal stops such as Bourdons, Open Wood Diapasons, and Violones represent correspondingly large amounts of material, labor, and a hefty price tag. They serve fairly consistent functions from one organ to the next, and once scaled and properly voiced to a particular room, there is little reason to replace them with new pipes.

Next, we explore any stops or combination of stops that have already been fulfilling a particular function exceptionally well. If that sound will serve the same function in the new specification, a strong case can be made for refurbishing the pipes and giving them a second life. Some strings, flutes, and color reeds fall into this category. Occasionally, rescaling a rank or even a portion of a rank can help a marginal stop make a much more effective contribution to the big picture.

In much of our work, we find that the principal choruses, mixtures, and chorus reeds are the most significant contributors to our signature sound, generally leading us to make these pipes new to our own scaling and voicing practices. The most important consideration of all is that every stop in the instrument, whether it comes with "previous experience" or is newly made, must work together to produce a cohesive sound of compelling musical integrity and artistic merit.

The most successful instruments are those that are born out of a truly collaborative relationship—a back-and-forth, artistic and pragmatic discussion about the needs, desires, dreams, and limitations regarding the project. A dialogue where the client provides honest input on a wide variety of topics, and the organbuilder applies this information in the development of *their* instrument.

John Heizer, Zion's organist-choirmaster, was particularly adept at creative dialogue, answering our questions with very specific examples. "Bainton's *And I Saw a New Heaven*; [B-flat chord] . . . 'Behold, the tabernacle of God . . . ' with a choir of twelve semi-pro singers" conveys more useful information than "I want a full Swell belching black smoke." In discussing the relative balance of the upperwork to the foundations, his imagery of having "the mixtures blossom out of the top of the foundations rather than building upon them brick-by-brick" was easy to interpret. He insisted that full organ should be satisfying but not overly loud, giving him the freedom to use any or all of the organ's resources at ordinary services. He noted, "I always have brass for those big Christmas Eve and Easter services."

Matt Farrell and daughter Megan racking the 16′ Violone

With such clear direction in our mind's ear before the Möller instrument was removed, it was a relatively simple process of sorting out which of its stops would be retained with little or no alteration, which would benefit from rescaling and/or revoicing, and which could make no beneficial contribution to the new tonal design. The retained Möller pipes would be combined with new pipes into a cohesive instrument with its own unique voice and tonal integrity.

Facade winding

In Heizer's words:

> Pat Murphy and Fred Bahr met with me at Zion, and we made a thorough assessment of the old organ, had a lengthy discussion as to overall sound, voicing, liturgical music expectations, the console requirements, etc. Without a doubt, all expectations have been met. The voicing and scaling have allowed a very warm, unforced sound and an extremely smooth crescendo. Full organ is exciting, but not overbearing; individual stops are lovely by themselves and in ensembles. They did an amazing job in rescaling the old pipework that was reused, and blended all that with the new pipework. The organ now has a principal chorus, a secondary chorus, reeds, and solo possibilities in all divisions. I find the console very comfortable and the Virtuoso control system easy to use. Accompanying the choir and playing the great organ repertoire are once again a great joy. Hymn playing has new vitality and the congregation's singing has been greatly enhanced!

The new PJM instrument, our Opus 60, has three manuals and 43 ranks operated on Blackinton-style slider windchests. A new chassis and layout places all of the pipes within easy reach for tuning access. Twin facades containing pipes of the 16′ Violone and Great and Pedal 8′ Principals, form the fronts of the angled side chambers, a marked improvement over the perfunctory grillwork that preceded them.

The low-profile design of the movable PJM signature console is comfortable and allows easy visual communication between the organist and other musicians. The easy-to-navigate Virtuoso control system by IOTI provides all the features expected today in a premier quality instrument. All of the console cabinetry, facade woodworking, chassis, and interior mechanical systems were engineered and produced in-house by PJM staff.

Installation of the organ began in January 2014, and the instrument was used for the first time in March. The dedication recital on September 21 was played by Eric Plutz to a capacity audience, and John Heizer asserts, "I think every pipe was heard! The organ received much praise for its voicing and expressive qualities." AGO President John Walker commented on the success of the instrument, noting, "This organ will be a great blessing—not only for the parish, but also for the entire city."

FREDRICK BAHR, Tonal Director
PATRICK J. MURPHY, President and Artistic Director

Rear gallery

Zion Lutheran Church
Baltimore, Maryland
Patrick J. Murphy & Associates Inc.

Opus 60 • 2014

Three manuals, 34 stops, 43 ranks, 2,542 pipes

GREAT
16 Violone
8 Principal
8 Bourdon
8 Harmonic Flute
8 Violoncello
4 Octave
4 Chimney Flute
2 Fifteenth
2²/₃ Cornet II
1¹/₃ Mixture IV
8 Trumpet (Ch.)
4 Clarion (Ch.)
8 Tuba (Ch.)
Tremolo

SWELL
16 Rohr Gedackt
8 Geigen
8 Rohrflöte
8 Viole de Gambe
8 Viole Celeste
4 Principal
4 Flauto Traverso
2 Open Flute
2 Mixture III–IV
16 Bassoon
8 Trumpet
8 Oboe
Tremolo

CHOIR
8 Gemshorn
8 Stopped Diapason
8 Erzähler
8 Erzähler Celeste
4 Geigen Octave
4 Koppelflöte
2 Principal
1¹/₃ Larigot
1 Mixture III
8 Clarinet
8 Tuba
Tremolo

PEDAL
32 Subbass (digital)
16 Contrabass
16 Subbass
16 Violone (Gt.)
16 Lieblich Gedackt (Sw.)
8 Principal
8 Subbass
8 Violoncello (Gt.)
4 Octave
4 Harmonic Flute (Gt.)
32 Contra Trombone (digital)
16 Trombone (ext. Ch. Tuba)
16 Bassoon (Sw.)
8 Trumpet (Gt.)
4 Clarion (Gt.)

Most standard inter- and intramanual couplers

Patrick J. Murphy & Associates Inc.

Jon Carmichael, woodshop, installation
Matt Farrell, project manager, winding, installation
Megan Farrell, pipework preparation, installation
Frank Friemel, visual concept
Kitty Greer, administration
Matt Jones, electrical, console, installation
Jerry Kohl, woodshop, installation
Chris Mills, electrical, installation
Mat Newcome, service manager
Dwayne Short, tonal finishing
Mark Tenreiro, design engineer/woodshop manager, installation
Michael Tondo, installation
Organ Clearing House, installation

Photography: Fredrick Bahr