

First 400 Years of Organ Music Offer Valuable Material

The fruit of one of the most important literary undertakings dealing with the organ and its music that has been published in the last twenty years is a work in two volumes entitled "The First Four Centuries of Music for the Organ," an anthology which is the result of a large amount of labor and research on the part of John Klein. The publishers are Associated Music Publishers, Inc., of New York.

It would require too much space to do more than outline the varied contents of Mr. Klein's book. There is a wealth of historical material dealing with composers and instruments from Dunstable to Johann Sebastian Bach, chronologically presented. Delving into the earliest history of the organ a large number of manuscripts and pictures of famous organs are reproduced. All of this has been incorporated in a de luxe edition. The printing is of the highest excellence.

Of leading interest to the performing organist are the compositions in the two volumes. Of these there are seventy-two, by seventy-one composers. They cover much of the best part of the works of the predecessors of Bach. The oldest composer represented is John Dunstable, born about 1370, who died in 1453.

One is impressed by the beauty of much of this early music. There is, for example, a lovely Toccata and Pastorale by Pachelbel, a gem in the form of a Pastorale by Zipoli, a fine chorale prelude on "Aus tiefer Noth," by Samuel Scheidt, and one on "Herzlich thut mich verlangen" by Delphin Strungk.

Specifications of the organs on which the composers played these works form a valuable feature. The stoplist of a model organ as presented by Praetorius in his "Syntagma Musicum," Wolfenbüttel Edition of 1619, will interest students of organ design.

One may conscientiously echo the opinion expressed by E. Power Biggs in a foreword when he writes that credit is

due Mr. Klein "for an outstanding contribution to the practical organ repertoire of today, as well as for a complete chronological diagram of the course of musical composition" from its birth to Bach.

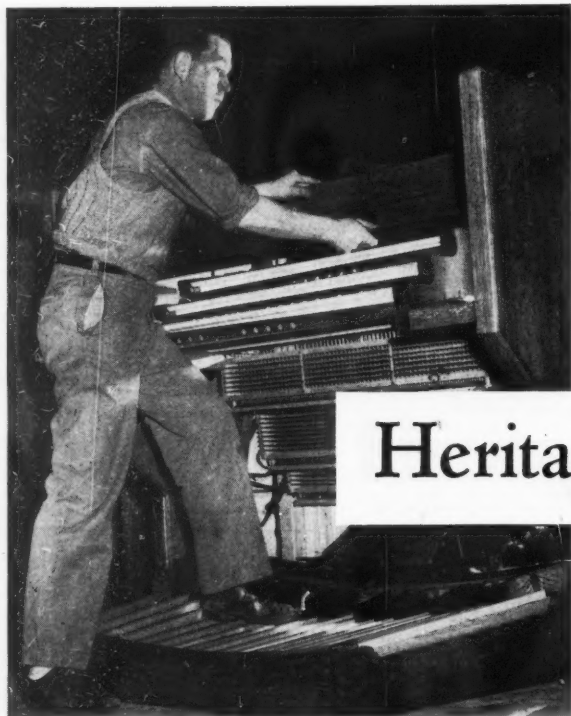
LARGE PHILADELPHIA CHURCH BURNS; ORGAN DESTROYED

Fire starting deep in the sub-basement Jan. 13 spread into the auditorium of the First Baptist Church of Philadelphia, where last month the congregation marked its 250th anniversary. It took firemen, mobilized by three alarms, more than two hours to stop the onrush of the flames after they had destroyed the large organ and burned out the organ and choir loft. The three-manual instrument was installed by C. S. Haskell when the congregation occupied its new building in 1900.

Walter Baker, the church organist, and church officers were standing inside the auditorium and had been assured by firemen that the flames would not reach it. Suddenly a spark glowed in the organ loft, behind and above the pulpit. The next instant the organ itself burst into flames and went up like a piece of tissue paper. The chimes fell to the floor, their jangle giving forth a mournful note.

Dr. David D. Wood was consultant when the instrument was built and the opening recital was played by Frederic Archer, then city organist of Pittsburgh. Frederick Maxson was appointed organist and director of music in October, 1902, holding this position until his passing Jan. 21, 1934. Alexander Guilman gave a recital on this organ in November, 1904. Mr. Maxson was chairman of the examination committee of the American Organ Players' Club for over twenty years, and during this time the candidates took their examinations at the First Baptist Church. Edward Shippen Barnes composed a Fantasie for organ and voices for the 500th recital of the club, given at this church, and in the late twenties Lynnwood Farnam appeared on a program under the club's auspices.

In October, 1934, Walter Baker became organist and director of music. During Mr. Baker's regime the church has carried on a distinguished musical program, being one of the few churches in the country to present an oratorio every Sunday evening.



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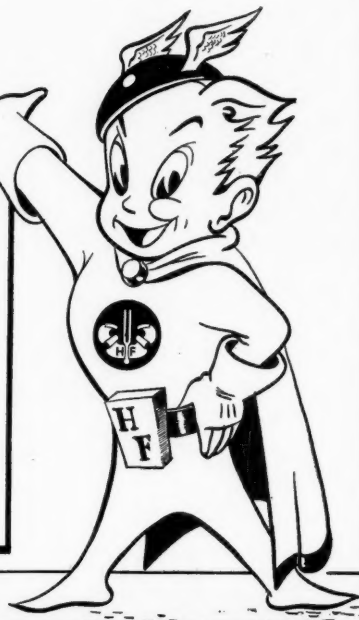
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