

## **A Review of the 1932 Kimball Pipe Organ Restoration by Reuter at Minot State University**

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### **Introduction**

W. W. Kimball of Chicago emerged in the 1920's and 1930's as a major builder of quality pipe organs, both "classic" and "theater" in style. In 1932, Minot Teachers College (now Minot State University [www.minotstateu.edu](http://www.minotstateu.edu)) in Minot, North Dakota, installed a 22-rank Kimball designed by William H. Barnes in the college auditorium. A recent restoration by the Reuter Organ Company of Lawrence, Kansas, has given the organ a second life, and for the first time in over a decade the public can again hear the organ. It now serves as a practice and teaching organ for a new generation of organ students.

### **Minot in the 1920's**

In the 1880's and 1890's, Minot hosted many gambling houses and saloons. By the 1920's, the city had built new churches, a hospital, established the College as a degree-granting institution, and formed many cultural organizations. By 1928 Minot ranked as one of the most prosperous cities in the country, based on business volume. The Great Northern "Empire Builder" began its Seattle to Chicago route in 1929, passing through Minot, and the Soo Line began its "Mountaineer" service between Vancouver and Chicago.

Between 1920 and 1930, Minot's population increased from 10,476 to 16,099. Music and cultural organizations flourished. As early as 1909, the community presented a December performance of Handel's "Messiah". The Teachers' College, known first as the Normal School, offered a music curriculum in 1919. In 1921, the community started a Schumann Club and a forty-member community band. Students from the college performed Gilbert and Sullivan's "Mikado" in 1925. In the summer of 1926 a 150-voice community chorus inspired creation of a permanent Minot Community Chorus, directed by the College's music department chair. The sixty-voice Chorus first performed in January of 1927. The College orchestra of fifth-two members first performed in 1929.

The Normal School opened in 1913. Dr. George A. McFarland became president in 1922 at the age of 64 and ran the school until his death in 1938 at the age of 80. By 1924 the Normal School had become Minot State Teachers College and offered a BA degree in education. Old Main had been expanded with a new west wing just before Dr. McFarland began his tenure. By 1925, Old Main had a new north wing housing an auditorium and a gymnasium. The auditorium would later house the Kimball organ and be named for Dr. McFarland.

## Purchase

In such a fertile cultural environment, the college and the community of Minot came together to fund the organ project. A \$5 gift by Mrs. Emma Cotton in 1925, earmarked specifically for an organ in the new building, started the fund drive. In 1926 the faculty pledged \$1300, followed by pledges from students and college organizations, but the total fell far short of the contract amount. The college realized they alone could not fund the \$12,500 needed for an acceptable instrument for the auditorium, so they extended the campaign to the business community. As a railroad town, Minot had grown quickly and the business community was active and strong. Pledges reached \$10,000, still short of the goal. A final push by the business community a few years after the 1929 Stock Market Crash allowed the college to sign a contract with Kimball at the beginning of 1932. Harry Iverson, well-known for organ service and installation in Minneapolis, installed the Kimball in May of that year. Designer William H. Barnes of Evanston, Illinois dedicated it on June 9<sup>th</sup>. Total project duration, from contract to dedication, was only five months!

At the dedication concert by Dr. Barnes, the following inscription appeared on the front of the dedication brochure:

“The Gift Organ...is presented to The State Teachers  
College of Minot, by the Faculty, Alumni and Students of  
the college and their organizations, generously and  
appreciatively aided by and supported by citizens of the  
City of Minot.”

In his program, Barnes commented about the tonal design of the organ. His program is as follows:

|                              |                 |
|------------------------------|-----------------|
| Grand Choeur Dialogue        | Gigout          |
| Reverie                      | Bonnet          |
| Caprice Heroique             | Bonnet          |
| Choral Improvisation         | Karg-Elert      |
| The Legend of the Mountain   | Karg-Elert      |
| Andante (Sixth Symphony)     | Tschaikowsky    |
| Scherzo (First Sonata)       | James H. Rogers |
| Pantomime                    | de Falla        |
| Toccata and Fugue in d-minor | J. S. Bach      |
| Prelude to Lohengrin         | Wagner          |

No other news about the organ is readily available until the departure of the last college organist in 1995. Sixty years after installation, the organ was almost silent. It was rarely used until disassembly in preparation for the building restoration.

One wonders about a possible connection between this Kimball and its much larger cousin 500 miles closer to Chicago, the great Kimball installed in the Minneapolis Auditorium in 1928. Separated by only four years, the Minneapolis Kimball has 121

ranks – 120 of them playable by the 5-manual “concert” console, and 26 of the unit ranks plus a Kinura playable by the 4-manual “theater” console. That organ is in storage in the Minneapolis Convention Center which replaced the old Auditorium, awaiting City funding for restoration. The tonal design of the concert organ is incredibly complete for an organ designed in the 1920’s, with principal, reed, flute and string choruses throughout. Three full-length 32’ stops (Open Diapason, Contra Violone, Contra Bombarde) give the organ majestic weight. Flutes and strings provide a broad range of colors and volumes. Complete Principal choruses form a sturdy backbone. Reeds cover the gamut, from soft and imitative to stupendous. Was this design influenced by the local church musicians who had formed the local chapter of the American Guild of Organists about a decade earlier, and most of whom had studied in Europe? Did Kimball learn anything while building this huge organ that they applied to the Minot project? We will never know, but the possible connections are intriguing.

## Physical layout

The auditorium is much like other theaters built during this era. The main floor and balcony seats face a stage with a proscenium arch and orchestra pit. The backstage area is small. Restrained décor frames the two pipe chambers that face the auditorium from the side walls, just outside the proscenium. One story above the stage floor, the triangular chambers speak directly into the hall. The large shutter openings hold a double height shutter front. Acoustics are typical of a modest sized theater, having a ring but no distinct reverberation.

This layout was problematic for performances with a chorus on the stage. Closeness of the chambers to the listeners, in a common dual-chamber theater organ arrangement, made balance and coordination with the singers a challenge. (During the rebuild planning there were discussions about means of correcting this problem, but they did not achieve a consensus and changed nothing.)

The left chamber houses the Great/Choir pipes on two levels, with the pedal 16’ open wood on offset chests around the perimeter. The Great, mostly on the lower chest, plays many of the Choir stops as well. The Choir stops and the harp occupy the upper level. The right chamber houses the Swell, again on two levels. The upper chest holds the unit stops – the trebles of the bourdon/chimney flute and the trumpet. Offsets of the 16’ bourdon, the 16’ trumpet and other 8’ basses line the perimeter. Below the 16’ bourdon basses is the “vox in a box”, with its own tremulant.

Both chambers are full of pipes. Reservoirs on the floor under the chests make access for servicing a challenge. There are many ladders and walkboards, so the pipes are easy to reach for tuning. Lighting is good.

## The need for restoration

After 1995 when the last college organist left the University, visitors played the organ occasionally. When dismantled before the building restoration in 2002, it barely played

since the squashed basement wind line restricted airflow. Windchest leather was still intact, although the exposed leather of the high-pressure reservoirs was not in good condition and failed shortly after arrival in Lawrence. Bear in mind the upper Midwest experiences huge temperature and humidity swings each season. Humidity ranges from as low as 5% in the winter to more than 90% in August. This exposed the wood and leather parts to a great deal of stress every year of its life. It is amazing to consider that after 60 years the organ still worked as well as it did. This is a testament to the quality work done by the Kimball Company.

Before his retirement, President Erik Shaar spearheaded a building restoration project, which included the organ. A community and college organ committee, chaired by Dr. Doris Slaaten, Professor Emeritus of Business, undertook fund-raising for nearly \$330,000. A single pledge of \$100,000 helped kick off the campaign – far more than the original \$5 gift from Mrs. Cotton in 1925! The College renamed McFarland Hall to Ann Nicole Nelson Hall after a victim of the World Trade Center attack of 9/11.

Minot was a major railroad hub in the middle of the Twentieth Century. With a decline in the rail industry, Minot has been reasonably successful in finding its fortune in other industries, including hosting a nearby Air Force base and persisting as a major regional shopping destination. While Minot remains a prosperous community of some 35,000, its once large and active churches, many of Scandinavian heritage, are today a shadow of their 1920's glory years. As found in many communities, large buildings built for large congregations with big choirs and active music programs are no longer filled for worship. In an attempt to recapture the crowds, many clergy have resorted to “modern ensembles” and “blended worship”, aiming at a new common denominator that theoretically attracts the young. The organ is often not part of the equation.

Interest in the pipe organ is thus waning in Minot as it is in many communities. The small community of organists, all of whom have made their primary living by other occupations, heroically came to the aid of the University's Kimball and helped in the fund-raising.

The committee selected several regional and national organ building and service companies as possible contractors. Five presented bids, ranging from \$294,000 to \$410,000. The committee awarded the contract to the Reuter Organ Company of Lawrence, Kansas, for about \$330,000.

### **Reuter today**

The Reuter Organ Company of Lawrence, KS ([www.reuterorgan.com](http://www.reuterorgan.com)) has been a regional company with a national presence for nearly a century. Like most of the major organ builders in the country, the Reuter shop, found less than an hour from Kansas City, is now managed by a new generation. Since the life cycle of a pipe organ is so long, changes in administration and philosophy of the builder do not show quickly on the national stage. This is true of Reuter, where Albert Neutel Jr. (“JR”) has recently taken over management from his father Al, who in turn had run the company following the long

tenure of Franklin Mitchell. The “new Reuter” has only produced a few major instruments, so the new philosophy is not well-known.

Reuter recently moved out of their downtown Lawrence building into a new shop at the north edge of Lawrence, home of the University of Kansas. The building was designed specifically for organ building. Raw materials arrive at the north end, all manner of manufacturing occurs in the middle, and assembly, testing and shipment occur at the south end. Some of the special features of the building are visible in the high assembly room near the shipping dock. There is a wood floor that allows the workers to screw organ parts in place. A gantry crane at the ceiling positions heavy parts anywhere in the room. Windows admit natural light. A balcony on two sides allows workers to move about without the need to assemble scaffolding. This room is large enough that several instruments could be undergoing assembly simultaneously.

There are many other unique features of the building worth noting. The large central shop includes space for making both wood and metal pipes, windchests, casework, consoles, keyboards and other small parts, as well as a large area devoted to pouchboard assembly. Other rooms include the computer-controlled CNC router, metal casting, a large spray booth, drafting rooms, several voicing rooms isolated from shop noise, and executive offices and meeting rooms that would make any company proud.

The Reuter crew makes almost all of their own parts. Through engineering and experimentation, the staff incorporates reliability and longevity into all of their components. Extensive testing of parts results in improvements based on scientific evidence and experiment. Rebuilds of older Reuters brings naturally aged parts through the shop. Where they find deficiencies of design in areas such as console construction, the staff can design in changes so future parts will be better and last longer.

Being a small company with its roots in the heartland of the country, the people of Reuter display common Midwestern traits of honesty and hard work. “Do it right” is a statement heard around the shop. Their philosophy is conservative, seeking to build a solid and reliable product based on their own experiences with electropneumatic actions, yet informed by the benefits of computerized drafting and scientific inquiry. Some examples of this are:

- Adapting the Blackinton style slider chest where suitable.
- Exclusive use of welded copper pipes (not soldered) rather than zinc where there is a possibility of pipe collapse during aging.
- A cleverly engineered solution to mounting horizontal trumpet pipes that encourages tuning stability.
- A method of “preplaying” keyboards during construction so keyboards will not need depth adjustment after installation.
- A redundant key contact that almost eliminates the possibility of dead notes caused by contact failure.

Tonally, Reuter is also conservative. Over the decades, Reuter has built thousands of organs in a wide range of acoustic settings. This experience has defined the pipe

materials and scaling schemes to creating a musical effect that fills the needs of the customer. Most clients choosing to go the route of an electropneumatic instrument want the flexibility of a movable console, sub and super couplers, extensions and duplexing, and have rather conservative tonal expectations. This does not mean the new Reuter organ is unexciting! Both new instruments and rebuild or enhancement projects contain beautiful voices able to fill a wide range of demands that serve the literature musically and beautifully. For lack of a better definition, Reuter builds a latter-day “American Classic” organ, updated for the new century. The Great includes reeds, sometimes duplexed from another division for flexibility. Reuter almost always provides a Choir rather than a Positiv that goes way beyond the traditional Dulciana Celeste pair and Clarinet by including principal choruses and colorful flutes. A typical Swell includes mutations, foundations and various reed colors. Large pedal divisions include a core of straight stops, strengthened through extensions and duplexing from the manuals. When dictated by spacial limits, digital voices extend the flexibility with color stops, such as Flute Celestes, Vox Humanas, chimes and manual 16’ or pedal 32’ extensions. This is not a purist philosophy. It is a philosophy based on flexibility and practicality. The switching system and combination action are solid-state.

## Details of the restoration

This project was not a historic restoration in the Organ Historical Society sense of the term. The OHS presents the following guidelines for restoration (last revised in 1986) on their website ([www.organsociety.org/html/historic/restore.html](http://www.organsociety.org/html/historic/restore.html)):

- In general, all extant original components should be preserved and properly repaired.
- Pipework should be carefully repaired by a professional pipemaker, replacements for missing pipes being made of the same material and construction details as the originals.
- Keyboards, stop controls, and other console components should be kept in, or restored to, their original condition.
- Pitman, ventil and other forms of tubular-pneumatic or electropneumatic windchests should be restored using original techniques of design and construction and compatible materials and replacement parts.
- Original bellows, reservoirs, wind trunks, concussion bellows, and other components which determine the wind characteristics of any organ should always be retained and releathered...
- It is highly desirable that a restorer keep detailed records, measurements, photographs, etc. during the course of the restoration work

Project organizers not only wanted to return the organ to like-new condition, but they also wanted a reliable machine that will serve the current and future needs of the college. To that end, a genuine restoration was neither desirable nor practical. The console, for instance, was not salvageable. Reuter and the planners undertook the following, as detailed in the contract:

1. Releather all windchests, including note pouches (1541), primaries (447), stop actions (15). (Reuter carefully reproduced leather thickness under OHS

- guidelines. All pouch springs were returned to their original notes. When winded there were no ciphers.)
2. Replace stop action connectors and all pitmans (903).
  3. Releather Chime action.
  4. Releather Harp action.
  5. Releather expression motor power pneumatics (20) and primaries.
  6. Releather tremolo motors (4).
  7. Releather concussion bellows (4).
  8. Replace all chest magnets (943).
  9. Replace all tuning slides on metal flue stops with new stainless slides.
  10. Repack all tuning stoppers on wood pipes.
  11. Repair tuning scrolls on reed stops.
  12. Make necessary repairs to any damaged pipes.
  13. Provide miscellaneous replacements for missing pipes, made to match. (Only a few were missing.)
  14. Clean and revoice all reed stops (5), with new tongues as needed. (In fact, the reeds were in such good condition after cleaning that they needed only minor changes.)
  15. Clean all metal pipes.
  16. Clean all wood pipes and parts and give all a new coat of lacquer.
  17. Build a new 3-manual console with a movable platform and storage closet offstage.
  18. New microprocessor solid-state switching and combination action.
  19. New DC power supplies (organ, console).
  20. Digital 16' extension for Choir Geigen Diapason notes 1-12. (A new unit action replaced the straight action. The original action can be restored easily in the future if desired.)

A Reuter crew moved the many parts, already in storage, to the shop in Lawrence. There were no drawings of the layout, and none of the Reuter crew had ever seen the organ assembled in its Minot home. They undertook to reassemble everything and succeeded in figuring it out. The crew carefully measured everything, including the rise of the various bellows, before releathering. At the start of the work, plant manager Robert Vaughan told the crew that they were to restore all parts to like-new condition, in the style of the original Kimball work. It was not to be "Reuterized." After cleaning, voicers checked the pipes and made only minor changes. Fortunately, the organ had suffered from "benign neglect" and was essentially as Kimball had left it.

The organ stands today in excellent condition. The clean pipes, with shiny tuning slides, look new. Even the wood pipes, with a new coat of lacquer, could be mistaken for new. New leather on all exposed reservoirs is clean and supple, and the key action is fast and crisp. The new console is beautiful and convenient to play. It has built-in wheels for movement to offstage storage, with just a few wires to connect to a convenient receptacle backstage. Reuter is justifiably proud of the result.

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The restoration shows a few minor changes from the original tonal design. The biggest change was converting the 8' Geigen Principal of the Choir from a straight stop into a unit stop, thus making it available at several pitches on both the Great and Choir. All parts from the original configuration are in storage, according to OHS guidelines, so it could be restored as a straight stop again in the future.

| <b>ORIGINAL</b> |                  |           | <b>AS RESTORED</b> |                    |                                |
|-----------------|------------------|-----------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Great</b>    |                  |           | <b>Great</b>       |                    |                                |
| 16'             | Diapason         |           | 16'                | Geigen Diapason    | 1-12 digital, 13-61 from Choir |
| 8'              | Diapason I (40)  | 61 pipes  | 8'                 | First Diapason     | 61 pipes                       |
| 8'              | Diapason II (44) | 61 pipes  | 8'                 | Second Diapason    | 61 pipes                       |
| 8'              | Doppel Floete    | 61 pipes  | 8'                 | Doppel Flute       | 61 pipes                       |
| 8'              | Concert Flute    |           | 8'                 | Concert Flute      | Choir                          |
| 8'              | Dulciana         |           | 8'                 | Dulciana           | Choir                          |
| 4'              | Octave           | 61 pipes  | 4'                 | Octave             | 61 pipes                       |
| 4'              | Flute            |           | 4'                 | Concert Flute      | Choir                          |
| 2.2/3'          | Grave Mixture    | 122 pipes | 2.2/3'             | Twelfth            | 61 pipes                       |
|                 |                  |           | 2'                 | Super Octave       | 61 pipes                       |
|                 |                  |           |                    | Mixture IV         | prepared                       |
| 8'              | Trumpet          | 61 pipes  | 8'                 | Trumpet            | 61 pipes                       |
|                 |                  |           | 8'                 | Tuba               | prepared                       |
|                 | Tremolo          |           |                    | Tremolo            |                                |
|                 | Chimes           |           |                    | Chimes             |                                |
|                 |                  |           |                    | MIDI               |                                |
| <b>Swell</b>    |                  |           | <b>Swell</b>       |                    |                                |
| 16'             | Bourdon          | 97 pipes  | 16'                | Rohr Bourdon       | 97 pipes                       |
| 8'              | Diapason (42)    | 73 pipes  | 8'                 | Diapason           | 73 pipes                       |
| 8'              | Chimney Flute    |           | 8'                 | Rohr Bourdon       | Ext                            |
| 8'              | Salicional       | 73 pipes  | 8'                 | Salicional         | 73 pipes                       |
| 8'              | Voix Celeste     | 61 pipes  | 8'                 | Voix Celeste (tc)  | 61 pipes                       |
| 8'              | Spitz Flute      | 134 pipes | 8'                 | Flute Dolce        | 73 pipes                       |
|                 | Celeste          |           |                    |                    |                                |
|                 |                  |           | 8'                 | Flute Celeste (tc) | 61 pipes                       |
|                 |                  |           | 4'                 | Octave Diapason    | Prepared                       |
| 4'              | Flute            |           | 4'                 | Harmonic Flute     | Ext                            |
| 2.2/3'          | Nazard           |           | 2.2/3'             | Nazard             | Ext                            |
| 2'              | Flautina         |           | 2'                 | Flautino           | Ext                            |
|                 |                  |           | 1.3/5'             | Tierce             | Ext                            |
|                 |                  |           |                    | Full Mixture IV    | Prepared                       |
| 16'             | Double Trumpet   | 97 pipes  | 16'                | Double Trumpet     | 85 pipes                       |
| 8'              | Trumpet          |           | 8'                 | Harmonic Trumpet   | Ext                            |
| 8'              | Corno d'Amour    | 73 pipes  | 8'                 | Corno d'Amore      | 73 pipes                       |
| 8'              | Vox Humana       | 61 pipes  | 8'                 | Vox Humana         | 73 pipes                       |
| 4'              | Clarion          |           | 4'                 | Trumpet Clarion    | Ext                            |
|                 | Tremolo          |           |                    | Tremolo            |                                |



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|        |                  |          |        |                    |                               |
|--------|------------------|----------|--------|--------------------|-------------------------------|
|        | Vox Tremolo      |          |        | Vox Tremolo        |                               |
|        |                  |          |        | MIDI               |                               |
|        | <b>Choir</b>     |          |        | <b>Choir</b>       |                               |
| 16'    | Double Dulciana  | 97 pipes | 16'    | Double Dulciana    | 97 pipes                      |
| 8'     | Geigen Principal | 73 pipes | 8'     | Geigen Principal   | 73 pipes                      |
| 8'     | Concert Flute    | 85 pipes | 8'     | Concert Flute      | 85 pipes                      |
| 8'     | Dulciana         |          | 8'     | Dulciana           | Ext                           |
| 8'     | Unda Maris       | 61 pipes | 8'     | Unda Maris (tc)    | 61 pipes                      |
|        |                  |          | 4'     | Geigen Principal   | Ext                           |
| 4'     | Flute            |          | 4'     | Concert Flute      | Ext                           |
| 4'     | Dulcet           |          | 4'     | Dulciana           | Ext                           |
| 2.2/3' | Dolce Twelfth    |          |        |                    |                               |
| 2'     | Piccolo          |          | 2'     | Concert Flute      | Ext                           |
| 2'     | Dolce Fifteenth  |          | 2'     | Dulciana Fifteenth | Ext                           |
|        |                  |          | 2.2/3' | Dolce Cornet III   | Ext                           |
| 8'     | Clarinet         | 73 pipes | 8'     | Clarinet           | 73 pipes                      |
|        |                  |          | 16'    | Tuba               | Prepared                      |
|        |                  |          | 8'     | Tuba               | Prepared                      |
|        | Harp             |          |        | Harp               |                               |
|        | Tremolo          |          |        | Tremolo            |                               |
|        |                  |          |        | MIDI               |                               |
|        | <b>Pedal</b>     |          |        | <b>Pedal</b>       |                               |
|        |                  |          | 32'    | Strohm Bourdon     | Resultant                     |
| 16'    | Diapason         | 44 pipes | 16'    | Open Diapason      | 32 pipes                      |
|        |                  |          | 16'    | Geigen Principal   | Choir                         |
| 16'    | Bourdon          | 12 pipes | 16'    | Bourdon            | 12 pipes, ext<br>doppel flute |
|        |                  |          | 16'    | Rohr Bourdon       | Swell                         |
| 16'    | Second Bourdon   |          | 16'    | Double Dulciana    | Choir                         |
| 16'    | Dulciana         |          | 8'     | Octave Diapason    | Ext                           |
| 8'     | Octave           |          | 8'     | Geigen Diapason    | Choir                         |
|        |                  |          | 8'     | Bourdon            | ext                           |
| 8'     | Flute            |          |        |                    |                               |
| 8'     | Flauto Dolce     |          | 4'     | Choral bass        | Choir                         |
|        |                  |          | 4'     | Rohr Bourdon       | Swell                         |
|        |                  |          | 2'     | Concert Flute      | Choir                         |
|        |                  |          | 16'    | Wallin Trombone    | Prepared                      |
| 16'    | Trumpet          |          | 16'    | Double Trumpet     | Swell                         |
|        |                  |          | 8'     | Trombone           | Prepared                      |
|        |                  |          | 8'     | Trumpet            | Swell                         |
|        |                  |          | 8'     | Tuba               | Prepared                      |
|        |                  |          | 4'     | Trumpet Clarion    | Swell                         |
|        |                  |          |        | Chimes             |                               |
|        |                  |          |        | MIDI               |                               |

## Rededication

Diane Bish played a dedication concert on October 19, 2004 to mark completion of the project. The well-received program adequately showcased the many colors in this small organ:

|                              |                    |
|------------------------------|--------------------|
| Now Thank We All Our God     | Sigfrid Karg-Elert |
| Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring  | J. S. Bach         |
| Toccata and Fugue in d-minor | J. S. Bach         |
| Bolero de Concert            | Lefebure-Wely      |
| Carillon de Westminster      | Louis Vierne       |
| Jubilation Suite             | Gordon Young       |
| Three Hymn Improvisations    | arr. Diane Bish    |
| Nimrod ("Enigma")            | Edward Elgar       |
| Toccata from Symphony V      | C. M. Widor        |

In remarks and in the program text, the organ was presented to the community as complete.

## Impressions

Kimball was one of the top builders of the era. Beautifully made pipes sit on a solid mechanism. It is no surprise, then, that this organ holds many lovely .

The strings probably are the most satisfying to our ears today. The Salicional and its Celeste are gems, both of construction and of sound. The tapered Flute Dolce and its Celeste are ravishing in their beauty. Coming in third is the delicate Dulciana and its flat Unda Maris.

There are just a few flutes on this organ. Most interesting is the Choir Concert flute, of Melodia form in the tenor range, but double length and over-blowing in the melodic range. It mimics the orchestral flute, yet its tone is mild. The round but delicate Swell Rohr Bourdon is the real workhorse, having to provide six pitches in the Swell. The true solo flute is the Doppel Flute of the Great.

There are eight diapasons of various pitches and scales. There is a Principal chorus on the Great, with double 8's, a 4', and the original Grave Mixture now available as independent 2.2/3' and 2'. There is no mixture. The Swell has its own 8' as does the Choir. The Pedal has a 16' wood diapason. Note in the original dedication program the scaling of some of the manual diapasons. Great Diapason I is scale 40, Swell Diapason is scale 42, and Great Diapason II is smaller at scale 44.

Five reeds occupy positions on all three manual divisions. The Swell Vox Humana and Choir Clarinet are soft and typical of the period. The Swell Corno d'Amore, in the shape of a trumpet, produces the sound of an oboe. Perhaps because of its unification at three

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Swell pitches and three Pedal pitches, the large and dark Swell Trumpet dominates the organ.

Through no fault of Reuter, the organ is disappointing in the room. Reuter, in fact, brought up the trebles of many ranks to even them out. This organ was designed to play period literature and transcriptions, but it simply isn't big enough to move the volume of air in the room. A tubby Pedal Diapason, a refined but small Great Diapason chorus and one dominating reed do not make much of an impression in the room. At a recent performance of the Saint-Saens "Organ Symphony" with the local orchestra, some listeners wondered when the organ was going to come in!

Is it fair to criticize this organ from a 21<sup>st</sup> Century perspective for being something it was never intended to be? That probably is not fair. It came out of the theater organ era when the "classics" were largely transcriptions from the orchestral repertoire. Note the literature Barnes played at the first dedication, which included Tchaikovsky, de Falla and Wagner. Yet this is clearly not a theater organ. Unlike its much larger brother in Minneapolis, there are no complete diapason and reed choruses, and unification provides most of the upperwork. It is a baby symphonic organ, not intended to be loud and not intended to perform what we now consider to be the classics of the organ literature. It came from a different philosophy – but it was built like a tank!

Several philosophical questions come to mind. Can a small symphonic organ from the 1930's fulfill the needs of a 21<sup>st</sup> Century university music program? The preparations in the console are an attempt to address this question, yet the word in the community is the University will not enlarge it. The average person of Minot believes the organ to be complete and restored. The University has no plans to put more money into it, and the local community doesn't even know that expansion is possible. There is no full-time University Organist to serve as advocate. The University has also placed limits on room access because of some minor and unintentional vandalism (a ripped stage curtain), so it is difficult for outsiders to gain entry.

Another philosophical question involves using mixed technologies. The Kimball had remained playable for 60 years with its old electropneumatic controls. In what condition will the solid-state switching and combination action be in another 60 years? Can a service person do a field repair? Will parts be available? Will lightning affect it? Will the computer parts in this organ still be working in, say, another 20 years? Does it make sense to mix technology that is nearly 100 years distant?

Mechanical questions aside, pedagogical questions remain. If rebirth of an organ department is on the horizon (there are 3-4 beginners now), the organ can serve admirably for teaching the basics of technique and the fundamentals of trio playing, hymn playing and registration. Should the department grow, however, teaching literature, organ history and registration would be a challenge. The faculty would need to expand scope for the more advanced students through use of nearby (and larger) church organs. This idea is not new, and there are several large organs not far from the campus.

## Conclusion

In spite of the Great Depression, the community leaders of Midwestern Minot made a major investment in their College in 1932. They could not see into the future where, just a few years later, teacher salaries were cut by 40% and faculty were required to live on campus. Their foresight acquired a top-quality organ, also built in the Midwest, which served for many decades before unavoidable wear required a restoration. The Reuter Organ Company we know today, founded just over a decade before the Kimball's construction, is a company of individuals sharing a similar background. It seems fitting that time should bring the two together. Their meeting was mutually worthwhile: Reuter gained experience from one of the top organ builders of the early Twentieth Century, and Minot got what is essentially a new organ. The community of Minot will be much richer for it.

## Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to Prof. Charles Dickson of Minot State University for his 1985 draft of "Minot History 1920-1940", available on the Internet. Thanks also to Kari Files, Selmer Moen and Gary Stenehjem for behind the scenes information about the project. Thanks also to the staff of Reuter, and especially to JR Neutel and Robert Vaughan who gave a detailed tour of the Reuter shop.

## Author

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Figure 1: New Reuter console on the Kimball organ at Minot



Figure 2: Kimball Swell chamber opening



Figure 3: Pipes of lower swell: Corno d'Amore on the right, tapered Flute Celeste in foreground

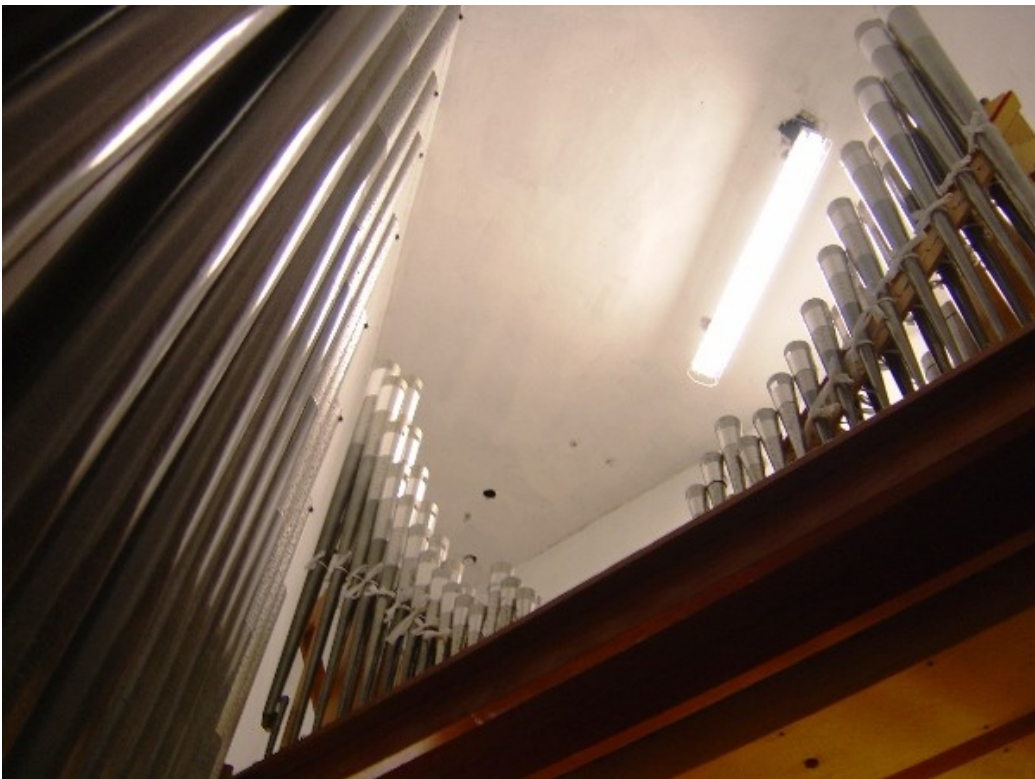


Figure 4: Upper swell (trumpet) and 16' trumpet extension. Note triangular ceiling, showing the shape of the chamber.



Figure 5: Reservoirs on the floor under the lower Swell windchest

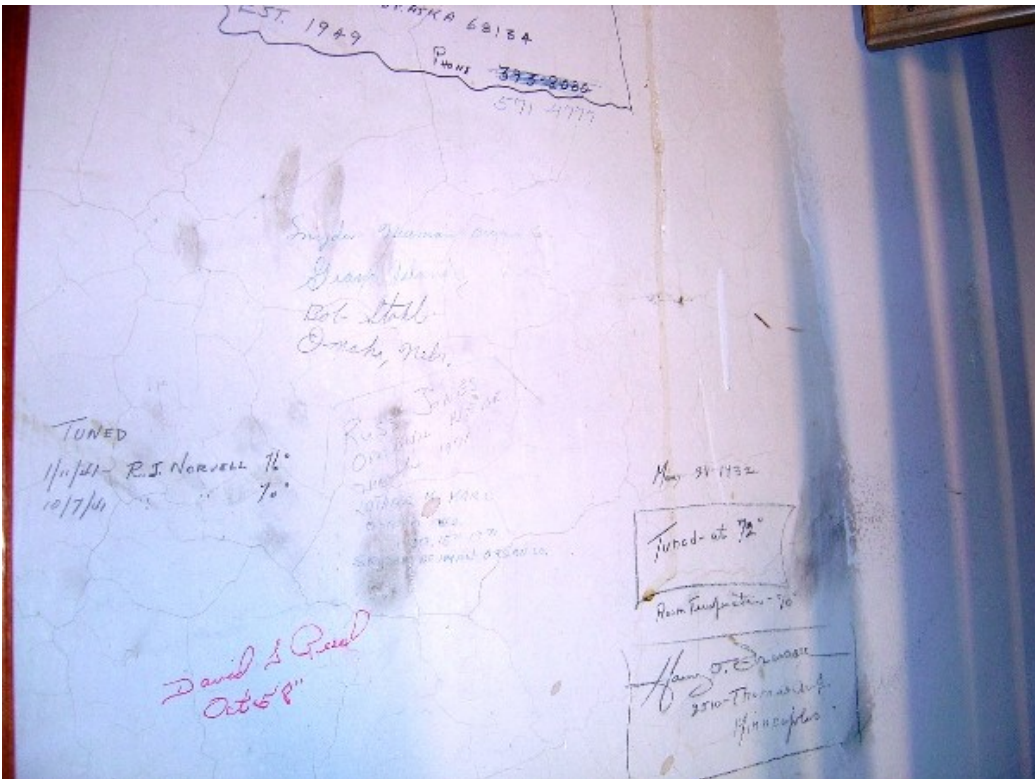
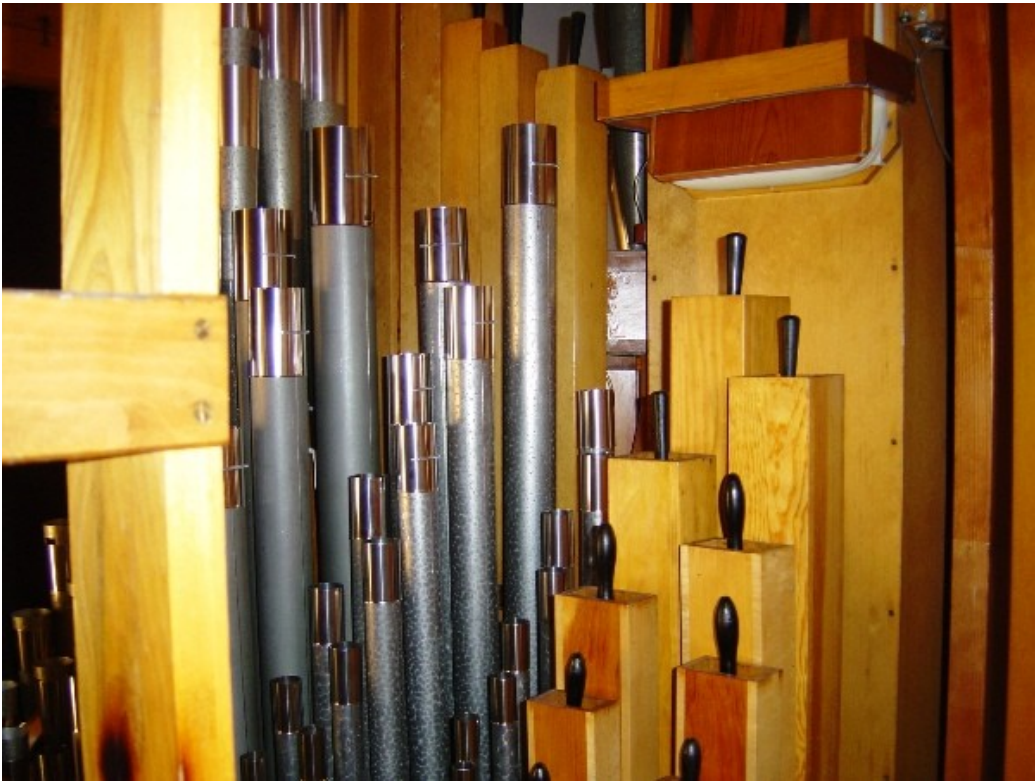


Figure 6: Tuning records on the Swell wall, including signature of installer Harry Iverson. When the chamber was painted, this section of the wall was retained.



**Figure 7: Lower Great; Doppel Flute in foreground. Note the new stainless steel tuning slides.**



**Figure 8: Great upper (Choir) chest and Harp, view looking up the ladder toward the ceiling. Clarinet in foreground lower left; Pedal Open Diapason (wood) on the right.**





Figure 9: Signatures of Reuter crew



Figure 10: New Reuter shop in Lawrence

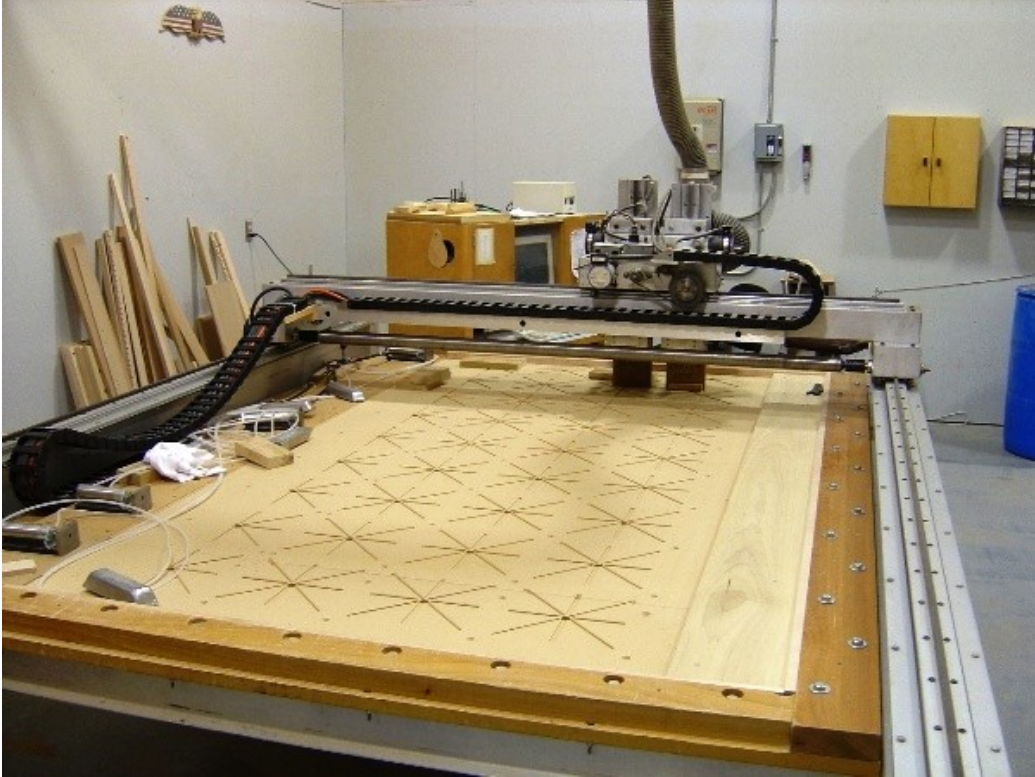


Figure 11: Computer controlled router. Flat panels can be held in place by suction or by clamps.



Figure 12: Forge for melting pipe metal



Figure 13: Leathering pouch boards



Figure 13: Bottom of a windchest undergoing restoration



**Figure15: Minot Kimball partially assembled in the Reuter shop**