

CELEBRATING THE GLORY OF GOD  
*The Riddia Bee O' Bryan Cliburn Organ*

BROADWAY BAPTIST CHURCH  
FORT WORTH, TEXAS









# *The Rildia Bee O'Bryan Cliburn Organ*

## A GIFT TO GOD AND TO OUR COMMUNITY



*Since its founding in 1882, Broadway Baptist Church's inspiring music ministry has become an integral part of the church's life. The Rildia Bee O'Bryan Cliburn Organ ensures that this rich tradition will continue into the next century.*

*This magnificent instrument has been made possible through the dedication, support, and vision of the entire Broadway family. In keeping with their desire to share and serve, the members offer the organ as a gift to God and to the community.*

*The Cliburn Organ was handcrafted by Casavant Frères Limitée, St. Hyacinthe, Quebec, Canada. Established in 1879, Casavant is one of the significant builders of fine pipe organs in North America.*

*The organ is the largest that Casavant has built, and it is the largest organ in Texas. It also is the largest organ of French aesthetics in the world, reflecting the basic design concept of the 18th and 19th century French organ builders.*

*Designed for use in worship, organ solo concerts, and symphonic concerts, the organ stands among the finest pipe organs in the world. Its sound is full, warm, vital, and vibrant in color.*

*The Cliburn Organ makes a powerful statement about worship, the first priority of the church. In its most profound role as an aid to worship, the organ helps us to become more receptive to God. It literally helps us to explore the mysteries of God by unlocking our hearts. Sounds of the organ have the capacity to set the mood for worship and to prepare us for new and life-changing encounters with God.*

*In addition to worship services, the organ is available to accompany community programs, hymn festivals, choral groups of all ages, weddings, funerals, recitals, concerts, and celebrations.*

*The Cliburn Organ adds another jewel to Fort Worth's cultural crown, along with the Fort Worth Dallas Ballet, the Fort Worth Opera, the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra, the Nancy Lee and Perry R. Bass Performance Hall, the Texas Boys' Choir, the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition, and the Amon Carter, Kimbell, and Modern Art Museums.*

*Music has been defined as an aperture, a window through which we can better see the glory of God. The Rildia Bee O'Bryan Cliburn Organ greatly enhances the clarity and quality of Broadway's spiritual vision.*

✠ *Soli Deo Gloria! To God alone be glory!* ✠





When members of Broadway Baptist Church voted to provide the church with a new organ, they elected to name the instrument for one of its members, Rildia Bee O'Bryan Cliburn. There could be no more fitting an honor to her life than the dedication to her memory of Broadway's new organ on October 14, 1996, on what would have been her 100th birthday.

She was born in 1896 in McGregor, Texas into a family already distinguished by religious, artistic, political, and educational callings. Both her grandmother and her mother, Sirrildia McClain O'Bryan, played the piano and were active in the arts. Her father, Judge William Carey O'Bryan, was a member of the Texas legislature and an advisor to Governor Pat Neff, U.S. Supreme Court Justice Tom Clark, and Sam Rayburn, Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives. Her grandfather, Dr. Solomon G. O'Bryan, was a founder of the First Baptist Church of Waco and a pastor to Sam Houston, president of the Republic of Texas. He also taught at Baylor University on the original Independence campus and is known as the father of Waco University, which was combined with Baylor University in 1886. Her great-grandfather was P. B. Chandler, one of the great Baptist evangelists of the early nineteenth century.

Encouraged by her mother and her grandmother, she began her musical studies as a small child. She graduated from high school as valedictorian of her class and went on to study piano and voice at the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music and at the New York School of Musical Art (now the Juilliard School). In New York she studied voice with Ralph Leech Sterner, president of the school, and piano with Arthur Friedheim, one of history's pianistic giants. He had been a pupil of and personal secretary to Franz Liszt.

Mrs. Cliburn completed her studies as an accomplished virtuoso. But in deference to her father's wishes and in accordance with the prevailing manners of the era, she did not choose a career on the concert stage. On June 6, 1923, she married Harvey Lavan Cliburn, who made his career in the oil business, and together they devoted their lives to the church, the arts, and education. While living in Shreveport, Louisiana during the depths of the Depression, Mr. and Mrs. Cliburn founded the First Baptist Church's Riverfront Ministry. The couple moved to Kilgore, Texas in 1940, where Mrs. Cliburn served the First Baptist Church as pianist, vocal soloist, and assistant organist, while Mr. Cliburn directed the Sunday School program.

All told, she taught piano for almost 50 years. By the 1950s, her reputation as a remarkable piano teacher had spread into the musical community all over the U.S. When her son, Van, a pianist whom she taught from the age of 3 until he went to Juilliard at 17, won the first Tchaikovsky International Piano Competition in Moscow in 1958, her fame as a teacher became international. And when, as a favor to her son, she played two difficult encores (Moszkowski and Liszt) after his 1962 recital at the Moscow Conservatory, she received a standing ovation, and her own pianistic virtuosity received its much-deserved international attention.

Mrs. Cliburn commissioned 14 orchestral works for Broadway, and supported a long list of local, national, and international philanthropies such as the Metropolitan Opera; the Van Cliburn Foundation; scholarship programs at Texas Christian University, Juilliard, the University of Cincinnati, and Baylor University; the Fort Worth Symphony; the Dallas Symphony; the Music Academy at Interlochen, Michigan; the Liszt Academy in Budapest; and the Moscow Conservatory. In 1987 Northwood Institute honored her as one of its Distinguished Women of the Year. Steinway and Sons presented her with its first Lifetime Achievement Award in 1988, and both the University of Cincinnati (1975) and Baylor University (1981) have given her their Distinguished Alumna Award.

In 1992 Broadway planned to dedicate its new organ in honor of Mrs. Cliburn's 100th birthday, then four years away. She was still alive and actively involved in many of her fondest interests. And even though she died on August 3, 1994, the event is still a celebration of a life vividly lived in service to God, to the arts, and to humanity. ❧ — David Daniel



**B**roadway's Rildia Bee O'Bryan Cliburn Organ is the 3,750th organ built by Casavant Frères Limitée. It replaces Opus 2091, a 92-rank organ that the firm installed for Broadway in 1952.

Exceptional in size and design, the Cliburn Organ has 10,615 pipes, 191 ranks, 129 independent stops, and 11 divisions. The front portion of the instrument in the chancel area consists of 8,859 pipes, 160 ranks, and 105 independent stops. The antiphonal organ in the rear gallery consists of 1,756 pipes, 31 ranks, and 24 independent stops.

The Cliburn Organ's pipes, two consoles, and oak cases were crafted to fit the grand proportions of the sanctuary's modified Gothic architecture. With a reverberation time of over five seconds, the sanctuary is a near perfect acoustical environment for the organ.

Two unique features of the organ are the horizontal trumpets in the front and back of the sanctuary and the addition of a Bombarde division specially designed to play with orchestral forces.

Opus 3750 is an electro-pneumatic instrument, a type of organ Casavant began making in 1904. When an organist plays a note, electrical circuitry carries the impulse to open a valve, thus letting air into the pipe, as opposed to mechanical action (tracker) instruments in which the keys are attached by mechanical linkage to valves admitting air to the pipes.

The electro-pneumatic instrument was chosen because of the placement of the instrument in two areas of the sanctuary. This type of instrument also allows the front console to be moved to several locations for a variety of programs. Any combination of the 10,615 pipes is playable from either one or both of the five-manual (keyboard) consoles located at each end of the sanctuary.

Unlike most large organs that are built and installed in stages over many years, the Cliburn Organ was designed as a complete instrument. It was built and installed over a two-year period.

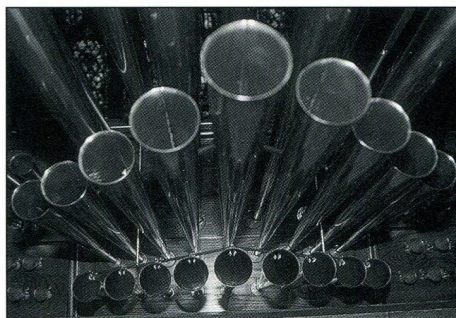
Casavant's skilled artisans painstakingly made by hand and assembled both the chancel and antiphonal organs at their shop in St. Hyacinthe, Quebec. They used the most beautiful woods to build the Cliburn Organ — red oak for the consoles and cases; maple for the swell boxes and pedals; yellow poplar for the wooden pipes, chests, and reservoirs; and rosewood and ebony for the keys. Tin and zinc alloys were used to make the metal pipes.

The artisans voiced each pipe to make sure that it had the correct pitch and timbre. The final test came when they played the instrument, listening to its majestic sounds and wide range of colors.

They then disassembled the elements of the organ and supervised their shipment to Broadway, where they installed the organ in the church's sanctuary.

Construction of the antiphonal organ began in February 1994. Physical installation was completed in February 1995, and the tonal finishers completed voicing the instrument in April 1995. It was first played on Easter Sunday, April 16, 1995.

Installation of the chancel organ began in early February 1996 and was completed the first week of May 1996. The tonal finishers arrived in May and completed voicing the chancel instrument in September 1996. The entire organ was first played on Friday, October 11, 1996. ❧



*Chancel chamade*  
 Photograph by Bill Cothran



Selecting, designing, and installing the Rildia Bee O'Bryan Cliburn Organ has been an exciting, joyful time for the congregation of Broadway Baptist Church. Now that the organ is a reality, it is hard to believe that it was only a concept in 1981.

It all began with a great deal of soul-searching when Broadway's congregation decided to refurbish its organ, the 92-rank Casavant Opus 2091. Poor placement and lack of tonal variety lead to a serious study of organ renovation.

In 1982, after developing a plan of action, Broadway retained Frederick Swann, an internationally acclaimed organist, to serve as the church's consultant. Mr. Swann was at the time organist/choirmaster at the Riverside Church in New York. Later he became organist and director of music at The Crystal Cathedral Congregation in Garden Grove, California.

In the months that followed, it was determined that the cost of refurbishment would be \$900,000 compared to \$1.1 million to build a new organ. All who were consulted recommended the replacement of the instrument.

In 1987, the church entered a \$4.3 million capital campaign, a portion of which was to be earmarked for the organ. As a part of the study process an organ advisory committee was formed.

As the committee began to explore the uses of the instrument, Van Cliburn said, "Why don't we look at the most noble uses of the instrument and the greatest gift that we might give to God?" The vision of a large organ designed for church and community use was born.

John Giordano, conductor of the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra, confirmed that the symphony would like to perform at Broadway with a new concert instrument. The 50+ organ concerti in the symphony's repertoire would represent new literature for audiences.

Members of music faculties at area colleges and universities were surveyed to determine the need in Fort Worth for a large and significant electro-pneumatic instrument. The group indicated that, with Dallas' two Fisk tracker instruments (very fine mechanical action organs) at the Morton H. Meyerson Symphony Center and Southern Methodist University, the Broadway organ would offer students the finest in electro-pneumatic instruments. Thus, the organ and music department heads gave hearty support for such an instrument in Fort Worth.

New specifications were drawn for an organ that could be used in worship, choral concerts, vocal recitals, organ solo concerts and recitals, instrumental recitals, and symphonic concerts. It would be designed to fit the sanctuary's near perfect acoustical environment for pipe organ and the grand proportions of its modified Gothic architecture.

While the plan met with support, the Texas financial climate did not offer the best opportunity at that time for the completion of the project. Plans were delayed.

In 1992 a new committee was appointed by the music committee of the church to evaluate the former committee's work, carry out its own studies, and come to the congregation with a new proposal. After extensive study and travel, the committee reaffirmed the need for an instrument for church and community and named Casavant Frères Limitée as builder. Under Mr. Swann's guidance, the proposed instrument was designed to function as a worship instrument, concert instrument, and complement to symphony orchestra concerts.

The congregation voted to proceed with fund-raising in the winter of 1993. On February 14, 1994, the church's diaconate voted to proceed with the project.

A capital campaign was initiated among congregants in October 1994 to purchase the organ for \$2.5 million and to renovate the church's sanctuary at a cost of \$1.25 million. By the third week of November 1994, pledges totaling \$2.75 million of the total project cost of \$3.75 million were made, and a cash offering of better than \$600,000 was received toward those pledges. More than 500 members, from children to adults, made pledges.

This particular capital project has an interesting facet in that the church decided that 10% of the non-designated receipts to the campaign would be tithed for use in projects on mission fields away from Broadway. This could amount to a missions gift of over \$250,000.

A new organ, renovation of the sanctuary, the mission gift tithe - Broadway is continuing to fulfill the vision born in a people over 100 years ago. ❀



Casavant, one of the world's premier builders of pipe organs, is the oldest continuing name in North American organ building. Its origins date back to 1840 when Joseph Casavant received his first contract to build a new organ for the Church of St. Martin de Laval near Montreal. Word of his work spread throughout the region, and by the time of his retirement in 1866 he had produced seventeen organs for churches and seminaries.

Before Mr. Casavant's death in 1874, his two sons, Claver and Samuel, had decided to become organ builders. To prepare for their lifework, the brothers apprenticed with the outstanding organ builders of the day. They also traveled widely in Europe, visiting builders and significant organs in France, Italy, Switzerland, Germany, Belgium, and England.

Upon their return in 1879, they established Casavant Frères on the site where the present workshops stand in St. Hyacinthe, Quebec, Canada. During their lifetime, the brothers established the finest traditions of craftsmanship among their employees and a strong organization to carry on those traditions after them. The organization continues today to stand for the artistic integrity and painstaking care that the Casavants cherished.

The cumulative experience of Casavant's 25 most experienced employees amounts to almost 950 years, all of them at Casavant. New workers are brought on staff as senior personnel approach retirement. Each new employee is interviewed by the president and, once employed, must proceed through an apprenticeship program lasting from five to seven years. Working alongside master artisans, they develop their craft and methods which are passed from generation to generation.

Broadway is especially pleased to have had the opportunity to work with the Casavant team. Pierre Dionne, Casavant's president and chief operating officer, and Stanley Scheer, the firm's vice president, offered excellent leadership in developing the Cliburn Organ.

The tonal design of the instrument evolved from Casavant's tonal director, Jean-Louis Coignet, working in collaboration with Thomas M. Stoker, Broadway's minister of music, Albert L. Travis, Broadway's organist, and consultant Frederick Swann. The striking visual design of the instrument was created by the late Jean-Claude Gauthier, Casavant's artistic designer. Each pipe was carefully regulated and balanced on site by tonal finishers Richard Marchand and Alain Couture.

Installation of the instrument was completed by artisans Germain Cormier, Guy Leclerc, Marco Laferriere, Ghislain Latour, David Marshall, Eric Marshall, Daryl Marshall, and Gene Bock. ❧



*Tonal finishers Richard Marchand and Alain Couture (l-c);  
tonal director Jean-Louis Coignet (r)*

*Photograph by Bill Cothran*