



Kelvin Smith poses for a photo with the pipe organ he's been building in his home since 1993.
Robynn Rowan, Montpelier News-Examiner

Local Idaho man builds pipe organ in his home

By ROBYNN ROWEN Montpelier News-Examiner, Jun 19, 2019

PARIS — Listening to music evokes and raises up emotions that lay deep within the soul. To play the music that awakens the soul is a gift from the master.

Kelvin Smith is the man behind the music. The man who possesses the gift.

He was born in April 1961. When he was young his family traveled quite a bit, making home where the heart was. He lived in Washington, Wyoming, Utah and Alaska, eventually calling Paris, Idaho, his home.

After graduating high school in 1979, Smith went on a mission for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, serving in the Paris, France, mission for two years. It seemed that both Parises were meant to be part of his life.

After returning from his mission he attended and graduated from Brigham Young University, obtaining a master's degree in organ performance. He met his wife Sharon at BYU.

He worked at Digital Technology Computers from 1993-2013 where he was a software engineer until the company dissolved. He is now semi-retired.

Some of his hobbies include gardening and computers along with travel and music. He has been building his own organ in his home since 1993. The organ will eventually have a total of 5,100 pipes.

When asked what prompted him to build an organ in his home he said “a regular organ just wouldn’t do.”

Smith plays repertoire music as well as hymns which requires more than a standard organ.

Smith has had the privilege of playing the organ as a volunteer organist at the Salt Lake City Tabernacle. He is currently performing musical recitals in the recital hall in his home with other talented musicians from all over the country. He has a grand piano and a harpsichord in his studio as well.

Smith shared a story about a time he volunteered to fill in as a pianist with the community choir. The choir director was leading “Handel’s Messiah” and couldn’t find anyone to play the piano.

When Smith went to the rehearsal, the choir director asked what he sang. He replied “tenor” but then told the director he heard the choir needed someone to play the piano. He could tell the director was pessimistic, asking Smith if he could handle that piece, not knowing his background. So Smith pretended to be overconfident, replying he thought he could play it. The director said he would give him a chance to try.

Smith selected a number, his hand came down with the beat as the director looked at him, and Smith stunned him with his performance. Smith said he could tell the director was ready for a disaster, and he gave him a masterpiece.

The director excitedly said, “ Yes! We can use you, where did you learn to play like that!”

