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AIO 2016 Boston Convention

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IN 1790, when the congregation of Boston's Brattle Square Church finally agreed to install the first organ in a Puritan meetinghouse¹, there were still some misgivings. A dissenting member offered to give to the poor a sum equal to the organ's price, for the privilege of dumping it in Boston Harbor when it arrived from England.² The offer was declined and the organ installed.

After that there was no turning back. As more churches followed suit, Boston inexorably, if gradually, became a city of organs, and the Boston area a hotbed of organists and organbuilders. In the next two centuries an artistic chain reaction took place, the products of which spread across the country. The names are still familiar: Goodrich, Appleton, Hook, Simmons, Hook & Hastings, Hutchings, Skinner, Aeolian-Skinner, Andover, Fisk, Noack.

The AIO 2016 Boston Convention will visit some of these builders' works, which have yet to reach their half-lives. But while the past is for remembering, the present is for living and the future is for planning. This convention will do all three, with educational presentations and organ visits that honor the past, highlight the work of present AIO members, and address future industry needs.

With its many historic sites, Old World ambience, numerous fine restaurants, lively cultural scene and

centrality to the rest of coastal New England, Boston is an ideal convention city. But not in October, when hotel rooms and rates are maxed out with a flood of foliage-season tourists. Therefore, unlike most AIO conventions held in the fall just as tuning seasons begin, the AIO 2016 Boston Convention will take place August 28-31, the week before Labor Day weekend.

The AIO 2016 Boston Convention Committee (Jonathan Ambrosino, Matthew Bellocchio, William Catanesye, William Czelusniak, Michael Foley, Andrew Gingery, and Jonathan Ortloff) invites you to enjoy a full week (Saturday to Friday) of AIO events. Although the week will be full, the pace will be unhurried. On the road, we are allotting plenty of time at each organ, and numerous breaks between events at the hotel. Based on attendance figures for the two previous Boston conventions (1979 and 2001), we expect a large number of conventioners and exhibitors. There will be ample exhibit time and, as is the recent custom, meals and evening cash bars will be in the exhibit hall.

THE HOTEL

The Boston Marriott Quincy is named for its town, located eight miles south of central Boston. Known as the "City of Presidents," Quincy is the birthplace of John Adams, his son John Quincy Adams, and John Hancock (the first signer of the Declaration of Independence). The Marriott is a new hotel with amenities AIO conventioners have come to expect. The hotel is offering free parking and wifi for guests. We have reserved a block of rooms (Group Code: aioaioa) at \$149 per night (plus tax), which is quite

1. This was not the first time an organ had been considered there. In 1713, the church's benefactor, Thomas Brattle, had bequeathed them his four stop chamber organ, which was summarily refused on religious grounds. It went, instead, to King's Chapel, becoming Boston's first church organ.

2. Barbara Owen, *The Organ in New England* (Raleigh: The Sunbury Press, 1979), p. 4



reasonable for a fine hotel this close to Boston and public transportation. This rate is being made available for three days before and after the main convention dates of August 28-31. The deadline for booking rooms at this special rate is Friday, August 12. We expect our room block to sell out quickly, so do not delay in this essential task.

GETTING THERE

The Marriott Quincy is easily accessible by car, with ample parking. Those flying into Logan Airport (BOS) will have three options for reaching the hotel: public transit (MBTA, \$2.75 one-way but free for those boarding at any airport terminal), the Braintree Logan Express bus (\$12.00 one-way), or a taxi (about \$50.00). Those who arrive via Amtrak at South Station can use the MBTA (the usual \$2.75 one-way fare) or a taxi (about \$40.00). The hotel is less than a mile from the Quincy Adams station of Boston's MBTA Red Line, and offers free shuttle service to the MBTA station and the Logan Express bus terminal in nearby Braintree.

The convention book will contain detailed information for all travel options. If you plan to fly in at odd hours, know that the MBTA trains and Logan Express buses do not run in the early morning hours. You should consult the MBTA³ and Logan Express⁴ websites for schedules.

LECTURES

Lectures are the bread-and-butter of AIO conventions, and this convention will offer plenty to munch upon. From beginners to business owners, there will be something for everyone.

Two Sunday afternoon lectures will start us off. Matthew Bellocchio will give a presentation on Andover's recent restoration of an uncommonly complex mechanical key action in a local 1892 instrument. AIO Examinations Committee member Chris Nagorka will talk about the

tonal portion of the new AIO Exam, highlighting fundamentals of flue scaling, halving ratios, cutups, *normalmensur*, and voicing.

On Monday morning, two noted historians will speak about the Boston organbuilding tradition. Barbara Owen will chronicle the rise of Boston's 19th-century builders; Jonathan Ambrosino will continue the story from the early 20th century to the present.

In the afternoon Tom Wood, one of our industry's senior sages, will speak about the history and development of the pneumatic windchest. This will be an action-packed (get it?) presentation, with models of various windchest designs. Afterward, Michael Fazio of Austin Organs will give a presentation on servicing that firm's instruments.

Table talks are always popular as bite-sized presentations. Monday afternoon will wrap up with four of them, focusing on tools and techniques. Deneb Puchalski of Lie-Nielsen Toolworks will demonstrate how to sharpen and hone both chisels and plane blades. Martin Near of Spencer Organ Company will demonstrate techniques for repacking wood pipe stoppers. John Panning of Dobson Pipe Organ Builders will present a narrated exhibition of the toolbox of Philip Wirsching, a 19th century German-trained American organbuilder, specially loaned for this occasion by the OHS Library and Archives. Building on that theme, Matthew Bellocchio will lead a "show and tell" entitled "What's in Your Toolbox." If you have a special tool, bring it—be it homemade, or a standard craft or organbuilding tool you've customized, or even a commonly available product you've repurposed. In the AIO we learn best when we learn from each other.

Wednesday morning's lectures will touch on sales and business management. Given that his company, Foley-Baker Inc., has renovated some very large and prominent instruments, Michael Foley will talk about selling the large rebuild project. Business consultant Brooks Sullivan will discuss effective management of privately-owned companies. To prepare for this talk, Mr. Sullivan has made a point of visiting and interviewing organbuilders to learn about our industry's peculiar issues and dynamics.

Wednesday afternoon's presentations will encompass three of the four elements in Medieval alchemy: Fire, Water and Lead. Jon Jones, a member of the National Fire Protection Association, will discuss various types of fire suppression systems and what organbuilders should know about them when talking with churches and suppression system designers. New England's cold and dry winters are notorious for wreaking havoc on an organ's wooden parts. A panel discussion about the design and installation of humidification systems, for organs with all kinds

3. http://www.mbta.com/riding_the_t/default.asp?id=26153

4. <http://www.massport.com/logan-airport/to-and-from-logan/logan-express/braintree/>

of windchests, hopes to offer insights on their benefits and challenges.

Workplace safety is important in every industry. Much as chefs cannot cook without knives, lead alloy materials are an indispensable, yet potentially hazardous, necessity for organbuilders. The AIO Workplace Safety & Environmental Sustainability Committee has gathered several experts for a panel discussion on best practices for dealing with lead, in and out of the shop.

ORGAN TOURS

The challenge of planning a Boston convention comes *not* in deciding which organs to include but in regretting having to leave any of them out. The AIO 2016 Boston Committee has tried to strike a balance between old and new, famous and lesser-known, tracker and electro-pneumatic. We will visit a 153-year sampling of instruments, from 1863 to 2016. To accommodate this abundance, there will be three days of organ tours outside of the convention dates (one pre-convention, two post-convention) as well as the usual Tuesday convention tour. Those who register for all tours will hear nineteen organs and a total of 1,241 ranks!

The Saturday pre-convention tour will visit recent suburban installations by Noack (2016, 2/25), Fisk (2012, 2/37) and Juget-Sinclair (2005, 2/34), together with the celebrated Aeolian-Skinner (1935 and later, 3/94) at Groton School, and the C.B. Fisk workshop in Gloucester. On the



way back to the hotel, the bus will stop in downtown Boston to drop off anyone who wishes to dine there.

On Sunday afternoon, the convention's first visit will be an unforgettable double-header, with trolley bells and incense smells. The buses will stop first in Mattapan, at the terminus of the MBTA "High Speed" Line. This short branch of the MBTA Red Line is a partially grade-separated light-rail, using restored 1940s-era PCC streetcars. Train-lovers may board the trolley for the 2.6 mile trip to Ashmont Station, and from there walk the two short blocks to the Parish of All Saints. Those who don't wish to ride the trolley can remain on the bus, which will take them directly to All Saints.

Our opening Evensong at the Parish of All Saints, Ashmont, will be a delight to the senses. All Saints was the first major edifice designed by noted Gothic Revival architects Ralph Adams Cram and Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue, and provided the blueprint for the 20th-century Gothic revival. The 1893 building has just come through a comprehensive restoration, all the better to savor its wood carvings by John Kirchmayer, stained glass by noted English and American glass masters, 1995 Fisk organ (3/50) in the rear gallery and a recently-installed Skinner (1929, 3/24) in the chancel. Add to this a men's choir singing Howells and other music, together with copious clouds of incense, and you have a truly uplifting opening service! Conventioneers should have ample time to come back down to earth during the dinner and exhibitors' night afterwards at the hotel.

Tuesday's tour hopes to be equally memorable, visiting some of Boston's most spectacular musical spaces. We will start in Brighton, at the city's western edge. There, in the visually and acoustically splendid chapel of Saint John's Seminary, we will hear Andover's recent rebuild (2015, 3/34) of the seminary's 1902 Hook-Hastings. While both are modest in size, both chapel and organ have a large "wow" factor.

We will then head east to the United Parish in Brookline to hear the last organ in the Boston area to be designed and finished by Ernest Skinner while still employed by the firm he founded. This 1933 Aeolian-Skinner (4/52) boasts many luxuries: both 32' Fagotto and Bourdon, a high-pressure Solo, and a seven-stop Echo that also functions as a separate chapel organ with its own console. The main console, meticulously restored (2008) by Spencer Organ Company, features Skinner's infamous vertical selector combination action; the Echo was recently restored, also

*Groton School, Saint John's Chapel
1935 Aeolian-Skinner, Op. 936
(case Henry Vaughan 1900)*

PHOTO WILLIAM T. VAN PELT

by Spencer, following water damage. After the demonstration, the church will serve a buffet lunch in their parish hall.

Next, we head to the secular heart of Boston's musical life: Symphony Hall. Completed in 1900 and designed by McKim, Mead and White, Symphony Hall was the first of its kind built according to scientific acoustical principles. It has been considered one of the world's best-sounding ever since. We will hear Foley-Baker's rebuild (2004, 3/75) of the hall's 1949 Aeolian-Skinner, itself a rebuild of the original 1900 Hutchings. Following the demonstration, the organ chambers will be open for inspection.

Right across the street is The First Church of Christ, Scientist, Extension (the "Mother Church"), completed in 1907. As the Aeolian Skinner (1952, 4/233) organ is too large for a stop-by-stop demonstration, Katelyn Emerson will play a short recital to highlight the organ's many colors.

The buses will then take us across the river to Cambridge, home to Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Christ Church, Episcopal, across the street from Harvard Yard, features a three-manual Schoenstein (2006, 3/51) that manages to sound rich and full in an acoustically dead Colonial-era church. Just down the street, in the First Congregational Church, we will visit organist Peter Sykes' studio and impressive collection. This remarkable assembly of antique and modern instruments includes an 1875 Viennese piano and a 1908 Chickering clavichord. Afterward, those who wish may linger and take supper at one of the many restaurants around Harvard Square. A bus will shuttle several times that evening between Christ Church and the hotel.

Thursday's post-convention tour will head north. Our first stop will be the Methuen Memorial Music Hall (4/116) and its world-famous instrument. Originally completed in 1863 by E.F. Walcker and Company of Ludwigsburg, Germany for the Boston Music Hall, this first concert organ in the United States exerted considerable influence on American organ design in the decades following its arrival. In 1897 Methuen millionaire Edward F. Searles purchased the instrument, and had it completely rebuilt and erected it in a specially-built hall designed by Henry Vaughan. (The instrument was premiered in its new home in December 1909.) In 1947, Aeolian-Skinner completed an extensive tonal reconstruction; Andover has made subtle changes since then. Following a demonstration of the organ, guests will be welcome to tour the organ's spacious interior.

Given the overlapping interests of pipe organs and rail-based vehicles, it seemed unthinkable to drive by the world's oldest and largest electric railway museum without stopping. At the Seashore Trolley Museum in Kennebunkport, Maine, there will be ample time to view more than 250

transit vehicles on display from the United States, Canada, and other countries. We will then continue — on pavement, alas, and not rail — north to Portland, Maine to visit the famous Kotschmar Memorial Organ in Portland's City Hall. Built by the Austin Organ Company in 1912, Opus 323 was the first municipal organ in the United States. Recently renovated by Foley-Baker, the Austin is Maine's largest pipe organ (2014, 5/104). Portland's Municipal Organist, Ray Cornils, will demonstrate the organ and give a tour of the chambers. Dinner on your own in Portland affords the opportunity to sample the city's exalted restaurant scene.

On Friday, the locals heading out of town for Labor Day weekend will clear the way for us to visit some of the city's famous instruments. We begin in the South End at the Cathedral of the Holy Cross, New England's largest Roman Catholic edifice, with the largest 19th c. American organ: E. & G.G. Hook & Hastings's monumental Opus 801 of 1875 (3/101). Then, in Copley Square, we will visit Old South Church (4/115, 1921 Skinner and later changes) installed there by Casavant in the 1980s, with extensive later work by Nelson Barden Associates. Just two blocks

SCHOLARSHIPS

FOR THE BOSTON CONVENTION

THERE ARE A NUMBER of scholarships available to help especially our younger members and attend the Convention there. With uncommonly good instruments across a spectrum of style, action and musical orientation, Boston is an ideal convention location. Educational offerings and other site visits make it promise to be a grand time. If you are interested in information on obtaining a scholarship, please do not hesitate to reach out to Sean O'Donnell, chair of the AIO Education Committee.

For more information, contact
edcomm@pipeorgan.org



Seashore Trolley Museum

away, at Church of the Covenant, we will hear a Welte-Tripp (1929, 4/51), altered in the 1960s but largely restored by Austin in 2001. After a lunch break we will go to First Lutheran Church to hear its Richards, Fowkes (2/35), which has become a favorite of the local early music scene.

No Boston organ tour would be complete without a pilgrimage to Church of the Advent on Beacon Hill. This Anglo-Catholic parish's Aeolian-Skinner (1936, 3/77), designed by G. Donald Harrison, is a milestone in American organbuilding. From there, we head to another landmark church and organ, Old West. This 1806 Federal Period building, designed by noted architect Asher Benjamin, houses Charles Fisk's Opus 55 (1971, 3/46), the first postwar Boston tracker organ to break out of the modernist mold with a classically-styled organ case. This elegant organ looks and sounds perfectly at home in the restored Federal interior, and will make a fitting conclusion to a memorable tour.

SPOUSE TOUR

AIO spouse tours have a reputation for being both interesting and fun. We hope this year's Wednesday tour will be no exception. The bus will head south, past coastal cranberry bogs, to the land of the Pilgrims.

The first stop will be Plimoth Plantation, a living history museum that recreates Plymouth village as it was in 1627. Costumed interpreters portray actual historic inhabitants, complete with accents, occupations and viewpoints. Visitors can engage inhabitants in conversations about events of the day and mingle with them as they go about their daily tasks. Be warned: the "inhabitants" know of nothing beyond 1627! Adjacent to the Pilgrim village is the Wampanoag Homesite, where present-day Native Americans explain and demonstrate the traditional crafts and lifestyle of the Wampanoag Indians.

The next stops will be Plymouth Rock, enshrined at the water's edge beneath a Roman Doric portico designed by McKim, Mead and White, and the Mayflower II, a full-sized reproduction of the Pilgrims' famous vessel. Many first-time visitors are surprised at the ship's small size and cramped quarters. Finally, after lunch overlooking Plymouth Harbor, tourers will head back north, with stops at a local winery and, as time permits, the Adams National Historic Park in Quincy, which preserves the home of Presidents John Adams and John Quincy Adams. The bus will return to the hotel in plenty of time for relaxation and changing for the closing cocktail hour and banquet.

REGISTRATION AND DISCOUNTS

This year's registration form will have many options and several discounts. Please note the 10% discount for any registration received by August 1. And because we are assessed hefty bank processing fees for every credit card transaction, there will be an additional \$15 discount for payment by check.

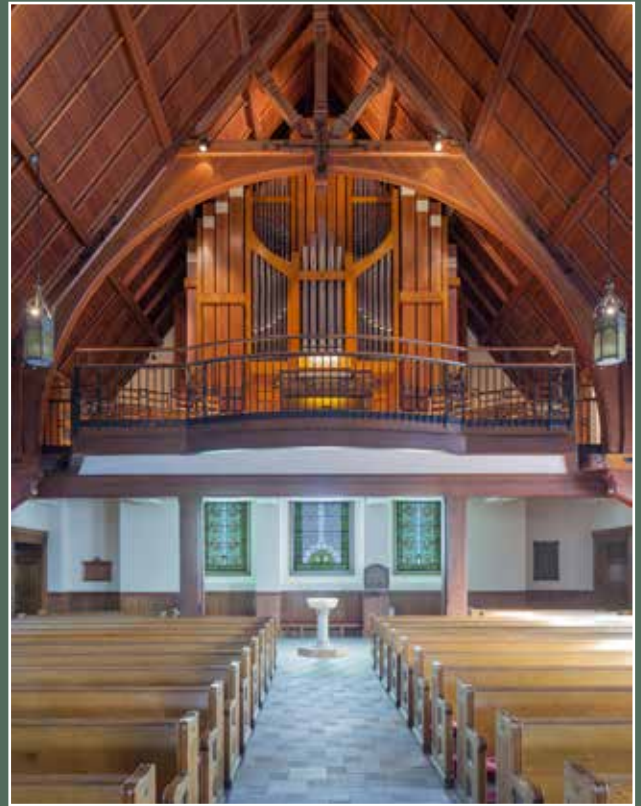
This convention's "35 and Under" gathering will be Monday dinner. There is no charge, but those wishing to attend must indicate so on the registration form. As always, AIO Executive Secretary Bobby Sullivan will be happy to answer any questions. To avoid logistical problems caused by too many people and buses, we are limiting convention registration to 200.

So—mark your calendar, send your registration, book your room and travel. Boston, the City of Organs, awaits you!

MATTHEW M. BELLOCCHIO is a Project Manager and designer at Andover Organ Company. A Charter Member, Fellow and past President of the AIO, he served on the 1979 and 2001 Boston convention committees and is chairing the AIO 2016 Boston Convention.



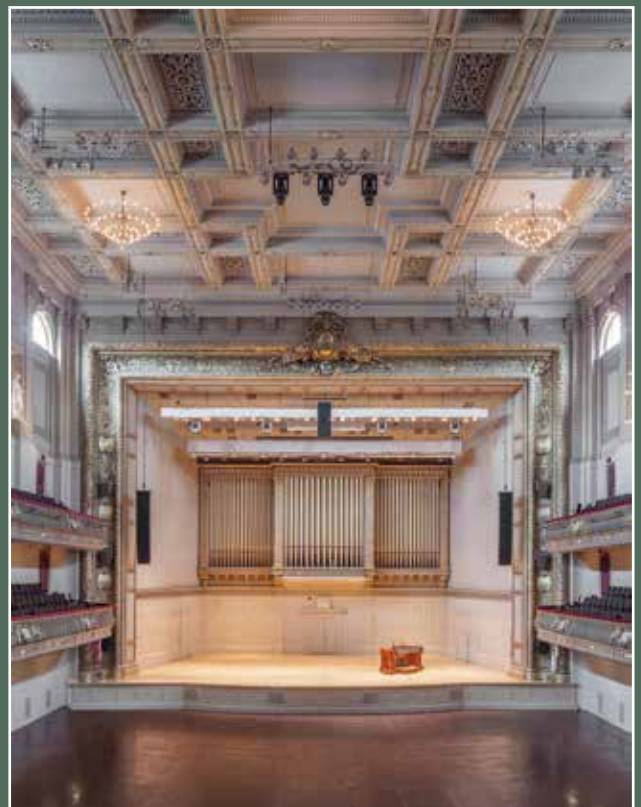
The Parish of All Saints, Ashmont



Christ Church (Episcopal), Andover



Saint John's Seminary (RC), Brighton



Symphony Hall, Boston

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