

the kirk of dunedin

and its unusual organ

Photos by Austin Gilbert

Resounding within the modern Gothic arches of The Kirk of Dunedin Community Church in Dunedin, Florida, is an unusual organ — an instrument designed to meet both the needs of the worship service and the demands of an annual theatre organ concert series.

Terry Charles at the console of The Kirk organ.



The Kirk, as a community church, has no denominational affiliation. Its ministry is focussed on senior adults and community outreach, with an extensive music program. Its theatre organ concert series, begun in 1968, is noteworthy in several respects. The programs are presented monthly, October through May, each repeated on three evenings, with the first two evenings sold out to season ticket holders months in advance. The third evening is generally sold out well in advance on an individual ticket basis. In addition to the series, there is a special summer program in July which is given twice. The highlight of the season is the December program, "A Christmas Fantasy," which is presented *seven* times to full houses.

Each year three well-known artists are invited to participate in the series, with Terry Charles, curator and resident artist, playing four of the concerts and the special summer program. For the 1983-1984 season the guest artists are Eddie Weaver, Donna Parker and Rex Koury. Among those who have played at The Kirk in past seasons are Mildred Alexander, Raymond Bohr, Helen Dell, Larry Ferrari, Reginald Foort, Virgil Fox, Ann Leaf, Richard Leibert, Ashley Miller, Billy Nalle, Rosa Rio and George Wright.

The Sanctuary of the church was

designed with proper acoustics for the organ in mind. The two chambers, each 15' square and 17' high, are located behind the chancel platform, with the openings facing the audience. Constructed of concrete with coved corners, the chambers are finished with Keen's Cement to give a hard, smooth surface. Each chamber has an opening approximately ten feet square, into which are fitted double sets of Wurlitzer swell shades.

A facade of two rows of gold-finished display pipes (which were hand made by a member of the church) is placed four feet in front of the chamber openings, with each end of the facade returning to the wall at an angle. The pipes in the facade are mounted very close together. This arrangement effectively conceals the chamber openings, but more importantly, the sound is deflected upward toward the arched ceiling. The unenclosed percussions are located between the facade and the wall behind.

A room behind the two chambers houses the relays and switches. The relay room and the chambers are air-conditioned. The two 7½ hp blowers are located in another room.

The organ contains portions of two Wurlitzers, a Style H three-manual Special and a Style 235 Special, plus ranks of pipes from Ernest M. Skinner and M. P. Möller, and specially-

THE KIRK

A Community Church
WORSHIP 11:00 A.M.

MINISTER—TED J. WEHLING
ASSOCIATE—EARL R. SIDLER

HOME OF KIRK ORGAN SERIES
TERRY CHARLES, CURATOR & ARTIST

Pastor Ted Wehling of The Kirk of Dunedin.

voiced reeds by Jack Steinkampf of New York.

As Opus 1066, the Style H was originally installed in 1925 in the Palace Theatre, Lockport, New York. It was subsequently repossessed by the factory. In 1941, as Opus 2236, it was installed at radio station WMCA in New York City. Later it was sold to station WGR in Buffalo, then to Dick Loderhose of Jamaica Estates, New York, in 1950. He sold it in 1954 to Gary McDonald of Sarasota, Florida. Upon his death, Mrs. McDonald donated the organ to the University of Tampa. Terry Charles purchased the organ from the university in 1956 and donated it to the church.

The Style 235 (Opus 1384) was originally installed in 1926 in the Paramount Theatre, St. Petersburg, Florida. When the theatre (by then called the "Florida") was demolished to make way for a parking lot Terry Charles purchased the organ and donated it to the church, also.

The Kirk of Dunedin organ was dedicated in a recital by Mr. Charles on Easter Sunday in 1968, and he inaugurated the concert series in October of that year.

For the first two years the organ was controlled from a three-manual Wurlitzer console, which was then replaced with a four-manual Möller console. The Möller had been rebuilt from a three-manual shell, with new manuals, pedalboard, Reisner stop actions and Hesco replica stop tabs.

Early on Sunday morning, March 6, 1977, disaster struck the church in the form of an arson-caused fire, which did extensive damage to the

church. Except for the organ piano, which was destroyed by the fire, and the facade, one side of which was scorched, the organ and its unenclosed percussions were damaged by smoke, soot and steam generated by the fire. The heavy swell shades, which were closed, protected the chambers from greater damage. The interior mechanisms of the console were a total loss.

Terry Charles and church volunteers completely dismantled the organ and started the work of restoration. The console was rebuilt with all new mechanisms. Windchests, regulators, tremulants, unenclosed percussions and some ranks of pipes were cleaned and restored by the Junchen-Collins firm. Bob Arndt and his firm also assisted substantially in the restoration. The pneumatic relay and combination action were replaced with new

Reisner equipment. After nine months of work and the expenditure of more than \$100,000, the organ was rededicated.

Finished at last? No, for Terry is planning to expand the existing unification and add several new voices of an ethereal and softer nature, as well as a Solo Fife, Viola d'Amore and Celeste, and a Tuba Mirabilis. A Dulciana and Vox Angelica are being tonally finished at the time of this writing. A spectacular Imperial Festival Trumpet en Chamade with brass resonators will be installed within a few months, as will a 32' Contra Bombarde and a 32' Contra Violone. Bob Arndt will construct a larger horseshoe to accommodate the new specification, which requires more than 260 stop tabs, and Terry will assemble the horseshoe and install it in the console.

THE KIRK OF DUNEDIN ORGAN

Four Manuals, 43 Ranks

Main Chamber	Pitches	Notes	Unenclosed		
Bourdon-Concert Flute	16'-2'	97	Upright Piano	16-8-4	85
Metal Diaphone-Open Diapason	16'-2'	97	Chrysoglott I		49
Viol d'Orchestre	8'-2'	85	Chrysoglott II		49
Viol Celeste	8'-4'	73	Glockenspiel		30
Dulciana	8'-4'	73	Xylophone		37
French Trumpet	8'-4'	73	Wood Harp		49
Salicional	8'-4'	73	Chimes II		25
Violin	8'-4'	73	*Imperial Festival	8'	61
Erzähler	8'-4'	73	Trumpet en Chamade		
Erzähler Celeste	8'-4'	73			
Violin Diapason	8'-4'	73			
Vox Angelica	8'	61			
Principal	4'-2'	73			
String Mixture III	3 ranks	183			
Grand Fourniture	4 ranks	244			
Mixture IV					
*Viola d'Amore	8'	61			
*Viola d'Amore Celeste	8'	61			
Main Independent Pedal					
Wooden Diaphone	32'-16'	29			
Subbass	32'-16'	44			
Bourdon	32'	32			
Solo Chamber					
Oboe Horn	16'-8'	73			
English Post Horn	8'	61			
Harmonic Tuba Horn	16'-4'	85			
Tibia Clausa I	16'-2'	97			
Orchestral Oboe	8'	61			
Clarinet	8'	61			
Vox Humana I	8'	61			
Vox Humana II	8'	61			
Solo Vox Humana III	8'	61			
Solo Tibia Clausa II	16'-2'	97			
*Tuba Mirabilis	8'	61			
Viola Pomposa	16'-2'	97			
Viola Pomposa Celeste	16'-4'	85			
*Solo Fife	2'-1'	73			
Chimes I					
Solo Independent Pedal					
*Contra Bombarde	32'	32			
*Contra Violone	32'	32			
*Contra Bassoon	32'	32			

*Ranks on order

Large string section of The Kirk organ.

