



A New Organ for The Episcopal Academy Class of 1944 Chapel

*Abridged from original piece by Raymond J. Brunner
of R. J. Brunner & Co.*

The Episcopal Academy Class of 1944 Chapel organ has required over four years of planning and construction. It was completed by R. J. Brunner & Co. of Silver Spring, PA for the opening of the new campus in 2008. The firm was first contacted in November 2004 regarding a proposal to move and expand the organ in the chapel of the Merion campus. Despite adding ranks to increase the capabilities of that existing organ, it was obvious that it would not be sufficient to fill the space of the much larger new chapel.

The decision was made to essentially build a new organ, using much of the pipework and some windchests of the existing instrument. Raymond Brunner collaborated with chapel organist John Powell to prepare a specification for a 3-manual and Pedal instrument of 43 ranks, with state-of-the-art console appointments and a well-developed tonal scheme.

The organ's space requirements, placement, acoustics, and other factors were carefully considered during the chapel's planning and construction phase. Although the organ's pipes and mechanical specifications were decided early in the project, the instrument's appearance and exact physical layout evolved through the desire to blend the appearance of the organ seamlessly into the building.

Work at R. J. Brunner & Co. was done by the following: Raymond J. Brunner, Terry Nace, Thomas Becker, Keith Eiser, Larry Siders, Robert Carbaugh, and Amy Brunner. Keyboards, main windchests, façade pipes, and Trompette en chamade were made by Organ Supply Industries. Other new reed pipes were made by TRIVO Co. and new flue pipes were made by OSI, Eastern Organ Pipes, and F. Booth & Son Ltd. Peterson Electro-Musical Products provided the control system, swell shade operators, and 32' extensions. Console stop and coupler actions are from Harris Precision Products and the expression shoes are from Arndt Organ Supply Co.

Pipes of the Positiv are exposed in the front center of the organ, reminiscent of the former chapel organ. The wood Subbass pipes, which were a prominent feature of the pipe display in the old chapel, are incorporated in the new organ at the sides. A horizontal Trompette en chamade of flamed copper in the center of the organ is a prominent feature both visually and tonally.

The tonal design of the organ provides a well-developed ensemble and distinctive character for each division. The final result is an instrument of great versatility and wide dynamic range. The acoustical properties of the new chapel were carefully considered during the design phase of the project, and the result is a space favorable to the sound of the instrument. The Episcopal Academy has made it possible for the new chapel to have an organ that will inspire students and performers for many years to come.