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Sound quality

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Soundquality

After its arrival and assembly over the summer, the “voicing” (adjustment of nearly 3,000 pipes for tone color and volume) of the Hartness Organ is well under way in the Charles Ezra Daniel Memorial Chapel. With each day comes audible progress and new enthusiasm for the instrument’s remarkable musical quality. As the excitement builds toward the organ’s dedication in April, we look forward to the diversity of worship, academic and performance opportunities the instrument will offer the Furman community.

Every visit to the chapel also leads us to reflect

on the related subjects of legacy and generosity. The chapel itself, a generous bequest from Homozel Mickel Daniel, is now complete with the gift of the organ by Tom and Edna Hartness. As symbols of Furman’s rich artistic and religious heritage, both the organ and the chapel are active catalysts with the potential to inspire, sustain and challenge now and well into the future.

One of the organ’s most important functions is to lead worship. The Hartness Organ, in its beautiful surroundings, will be ideal for hymns ancient

and new, choral masterpieces, and vocal and instrumental solos. The sheer beauty of the organ’s sound, whether playing solo or accompanying the congregation and choir, will enrich worship and uplift spirits.

In addition, the organ will significantly enhance and undergird our primary mission: teaching. As the most complex, multicolored and grandiose musical instrument produced by Western civilization, the organ traces its roots back to antiquity and has a performing literature that spans five centuries. Prior to the 20th century it represented one of the peaks of human technological development, and even today its components — pipes, keyboards, trackers, wind chests — inspire awe through their sheer number, diversity and complexity.

The Furman organ — Opus 121 from the C.B. Fisk firm of Gloucester, Mass. — offers a fusion of technology old and new. Key action and winding systems based on centuries-old principles combine with state-of-the-art electronic

features to give the player control over a panoply of sounds and tonal colors.

The Hartness Organ’s educational potential will extend to all Furman students and serve as an excellent vehicle for historical, sociological and technical study. Classes in religion and church history might use the organ to study and authentically re-create the sound of Martin Luther’s chorales, while physics students could explore acoustics and the nature of organ sounds.

Because of the exceptional quality of its workmanship and the international reputation of its builder, the Hartness Organ will attract organists, organ students and music lovers to the campus. For performer and listener alike, the combination of the instrument’s vibrant sounds and the generous acoustics of Daniel Chapel will produce an effect similar to that of a European cathedral organ.

The organ will also dramatically enhance the concert scene in the Upstate through solo recitals and performances with choir and orchestra. Renowned concert artists, major competition winners and prominent Furman alumni will be featured at its three-manual keyboard, and its many sounds, from barely audible whispers to earthshaking throbs, will amaze, engage, thrill and inspire.

The Hartness Organ will speak eloquently to chapel worshipers’ hearts and minds while capturing the intellectual and artistic imagination of Furman students. It will serve as a teaching and performance instrument of world-class quality and provide exciting concert experiences. Because Furman’s identity, like that of donors Tom and Edna Hartness, is synonymous with quality, it is only appropriate that an instrument such as this claim its place both in the list of Furman distinctives and as an active component in the university’s own dynamic legacy.

— **Charles Tompkins and William Thomas**
Professors of Music

A complete report on the Hartness Organ will be included in the winter issue of Furman. The inaugural recital, to be presented by university organist Charles Tompkins, will be April 18. For information, call the music department at (864) 294-2086.

