

CONCLUSIONS

Even though the author of this study has loved the sounds and respected the history of the pipe organs of his native Argentina for a long time, he had never appreciated the complex story told by each of these treasures until he began this study. While that story is certainly one about organs, and thus about the creators of these masterpieces, it is also one about composers and musicians, missionaries and immigrants, priests and laity, businessmen and city leaders . . . one about the history of Argentina.

A primary objective of *Historic Pipe Organs in Argentina* was to uncover the story of this unique collection of musical instruments. There were, dispersed all over Argentina, primary sources such as letters, documents, articles, and other materials which had never been gathered and reviewed in order to construct a history. In addition, there were many undiscovered pictures, letters, and documents. This combination of known and hitherto unknown sources gives this study a special magnitude and significance.

Turning to these many sources was especially important because the instruments themselves often fail to tell an accurate or complete history. As mentioned in the introduction, because of the economic prosperity experienced in Argentina between the years 1860 to 1930, early instruments were replaced with new Romantic- style organs and therefore almost no organs have survived from the time of the colonization. Of the three supposed colonial organs in Argentina, with the exception of the remains of the *Órgano de Procesiones* at Susques, there is no conclusive evidence that these instruments actually reflect organs of the period before 1816. Even though there could be pipework dating from the eighteenth century in both the organ at the Museum in Córdoba and the

Choir organ at the cathedral in Buenos Aires, especially in the former, these instruments were built or rebuilt at the beginning of the nineteenth century (see appendix II). Rather than in Argentina, it is in such countries as Perú and Bolivia that a researcher must turn to study organs built by the colonizers, missionaries, and inhabitants of the land of South America.

Thus, the organs that are central to exploring the history of pipe organs in Argentina are those of Italian, French, German, and British origin. All of these treasures arrived in Argentina almost simultaneously. Buenos Aires is one city, if not the only city in the world, in which the connoisseur can enjoy the sounds of four organ schools of the nineteenth century within walking distance of one another. One can only imagine how busy the port of Buenos Aires was during the years following 1860 when all of these organs as well as the stained glass windows, marble, and other goods arrived for the churches that were being built. As in the case of colonial organs, economic prosperity initiated an unintentional pattern of destruction or historically inappropriate changes to the organs located in churches where funds were available. The contrary occurred in poorer churches where necessity required that instruments be preserved in their original state, and thus these organs reveal their history today.

While the primary objective of this study was to tell the history of the pipe organ in Argentina, it is important to emphasize the forces that continue to threaten these instruments. It is a unique situation, that even though Argentina is home to several world-renowned organists, there are no pipe organ factories or artisans in the country. Except for a few instances, there are not even well-trained pipe organ maintenance personnel.

Although Argentinean organists have studied abroad and received first-class training, the organ builders, tuners, and maintenance technicians often have received no education abroad. Sadly, builders continue to receive substantial contracts from churches and the government to perform pseudo restorations. The author of this study hopes to connect young Argentineans interested in organ building with established organ companies to develop apprenticeship programs that will prepare future builders capable of maintaining this important cultural legacy.

While some of the historical pipe organs in Argentina are still in good condition, many of the organs mentioned in this study are in a sad state of deterioration. This is due not only to the lack of well-prepared organ builders, but also to the downgrading of music in most of the churches in Argentina where classical music has been replaced by folk-style music, and the pipe organ has been replaced by a simple electronic keyboard or a guitar. Without a renewed recognition of the centrality of classical music to the liturgy, it is inevitable that the organs will remain threatened.

Historic Pipe Organs in Argentina has attempted to tell the history of these instruments. But it is important that more than a history be preserved; the instruments themselves must be maintained and the music that once sounded from them must again be heard in the churches. International music foundations, organ historical societies, as well as the government in Argentina must take the matter of preserving these instruments very seriously. All the organs included in this dissertation should bear the title of Historical Monuments. If possible, organs should be preserved in their original locations. If it is necessary to move an instrument, because of its precious historical and cultural

character, it should never be moved abroad. Any restoration performed in these instruments should follow the Guidelines for Conservation and Restoration of the Organ Historical Society found at <http://www.organsociety.org>.

The glorious sound of each organ is unique and embodies a very important part of the history of music in the world. As important as that history is, the significance of these treasures must be understood in an even larger context—artistic, religious, and cultural. An organ is not only a complex apparatus to make music, it is also a complete piece of art. The cases and façade of each instrument are part of the architecture of the churches. The churches are the center of the religious life of the country. The country itself—Argentina—is one with a respected cultural legacy. Argentineans should be proud of these treasures as a whole and take the fundamental steps necessary to share them with the rest of the world, since each person who sees and hears the historic pipe organs in Argentina will experience part of the heritage of this great country.