

This dissertation examines the practice of voicing and its implications for musical performance. Organ sounds are shaped to suit the practice of musical performance, and they influence that practice in significant ways. This study seeks to describe precisely the role those sounds play in the context of musical performance and interpretation. More broadly, it examines the visions and artistic perspectives of those who create the sounds and those who use them in performance— voicers and musicians.

Pipe sounds are shaped by a practitioner called a voicer, in a process that is essentially one of gradual transformation of sound; that process is called voicing. The task of voicing demands excellent manual dexterity, solid theoretical knowledge, and a keen sense of hearing. The name *voicing* also suggests an approach to sounds that seems to transcend those aspects of the craft. Voicing means to give voice, and to give voice means to give life. The sounds of the organ are thus shaped with the intent to epitomize forms of human expression, and those forms of expression will be heard in the context of a musical practice. Thus: what exactly constitutes an organ voice? What type of concerns emerge during this process of voicing? In which ways do the voices that are created influence the music performed on the organ?

The answers to those questions were investigated in the context of a collaboration between a voicer and an organist (the author), over a period of roughly two years, while an organ was being built for the concert hall Studio Acusticum at Piteå, in northern Sweden. Since the researcher was a musician, the research questions are naturally approached from a musical stance.

This study comes under the umbrella of artistic research, and its results are not only articulated verbally, but also, and just as importantly, enacted through artistic content. The dissertation includes the creation of new artworks, and the exploration of artistic media. The ethnographic model is clearly felt within the text as well, as it deals mostly with examination of documents, dialogues, sounds, events, and the perspectives of different people.

The title of the dissertation—*Never Heard Before*—was originally the motto for the new Studio Acusticum organ, that served as a platform for the study. Here it serves to express the idea that the voicer-musician encounter has not previously been the subject of research, and that the materials presented in the text—both the dialogues and the sounds collected during the process of voicing—were things never heard before.