It is Not Really a Revival:
Creating a Theatre Organ Culture in the Twenty-First Century

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Reconstructing and resurrecting

When entering Studio 1, in a building formerly owned by a Dutch broadcasting company in Hilversum, one of the first design aspects of the room to be noticed is a balcony, situated in the middle of this radio studio, high above the ground where the orchestras play. When this Studio was built, in 1967, the idea was to house a theatre organ there. Instead, it is now a place used for theatricalities, for instance as a stage for choirs. However, over the next two years, a remnant of an era in which radio took centre stage as a mass medium will be reconstructed on this balcony. During this project the Pierre Palla Organ, previously owned by the AVRO (*Algemene Verenigde Radio Omroep* [General united radio broadcasting company]) will be installed here, in the former VARA building (*Vereniging van Arbeiders Radio Amateurs* [association of labourers' radio amateurs]. However, the VARA and the AVRO, as this paper will divulge, were not always in agreement. An enormous rivalry between the two broadcasting companies which lasted for decades commenced in the late 1920s.

Soon after radio took off in Hilversum, in the early 1920s, it became clear from the numbers of people listening that radio would have a real impact. Political parties and religious groups quickly realised that radio was able to shape "individual and group identity as never before" (Douglas, 1996, pp. 98-99) and could be a "cultural factor of importance" (Wijfjes, 2009, p. 23). Because of this understanding, broadcasting companies with a more ideological background emerged. Radio was introduced not only to people who had a technical interest in the apparatus, but also to those who were interested in a certain ideology (Wijfjes, 1994, p. 47).

One of the broadcasting companies that emerged was the VARA. The VARA consisted of a number of groups of local radio amateurs who joined forces because they were afraid that the socialist sound would be ignored and overlooked. When in 1930 radio channels and broadcasting time would be divided and the AVRO was also formed – this was a group with links to the Telegraaf, and other more right-wing parties – a rivalry between the two companies which lasted for years commenced. The AVRO soon became the biggest of the broadcasting

companies, but despite this fact, it was decided in 1930 that the AVRO would share a radio channel with the VARA. The AVRO was placed on equal footing with a revolutionary club, which hardly had any sense when it came to making good radio, and had neither the funds nor the technical experience to do so (Wijfjes, 1994, p. 50).

Now, the AVRO organ, one of the last remaining physical objects which reminds of a bygone era, will be recreated the former VARA building. In this essay I focus on the reconstruction of this organ in Hilversum in order to explore how a historical musical culture of the past, that of the theatre organ, is being recreated for the twenty-first century. Questions I seek to answer include questions like: what is it that is actually being restored and why is it being restored today? What is the overall purpose of this reconstruction, apart from the fact that the organ and the building are official heritage sites? How is this organ from the 1930s restored and reconfigured so it has a function in the 21st century? The more general, overarching question this paper will in the end attempts answer is not only concerned with how the Pierre Palla Organ is being restored at the moment, but also explores how the organ played a part in the past rivalry between the AVRO and the VARA, as I ask: *What can the Pierre Palla Organ, being a historical object from a certain age, divulge about the past and how does this knowledge affect the restoration of this instrument?*

The way of thinking I employ involves seeing the organ as an "instrument of knowledge" (Peters, 2013, p. 88). As Peters writes, all the different parts of organs, like the pipes or the bellows, "carry information about how the instruments were designed and built, how they were meant to sound, and how they formed part of musical practices" (2013, p. 88) and "one way of learning more about these stories is studying and restoring existing instruments" (2013, p. 88). In this case, I study the restoration of the Pierre Palla Organ, and do so by focusing on two aspects in particular. On the one hand, I will argue that this organ is an exciting historical artefact to study because of its materiality, which can lead to conclusions as to the building, the design, and the different uses of the instrument then and now. On the other hand, I will discuss the meaning attributed to this instrument by those who interact with it. The meaning attributed to the organ in

the present can be insightful with regards to the ideas behind the reconstruction of this instrument, while the meaning attributed in the past, can be related back to the pillarization of society in the Netherlands and the rivalry between the AVRO and the VARA. By looking at the organ like this I can write a history of the rivalry between the AVRO and VARA which differs from the one found in history books, a new historical narrative on the history of radio broadcasting in the Netherlands, as the focus usually is on the broadcasting companies themselves and the people involved, not on non-human actors like instruments. Second, by focusing on the organ in terms of its construction and use, one can make a comparison between how the Pierre Palla Organ was originally constructed and played a part in the 1930s and how this instrument will be reconstructed in the 21st century. It will become clear that the ultimate goal of the reinstallation of the Pierre Palla Organ in the former VARA studio is not to recreate a culture of the past, but to create one for the future.

Methods

There are more underlying reasons why when studying radio, the 1930s are especially worth investigating, and an organ is a particularly telling instrument. When it comes to studying the organ, it can be said that this is an instrument which, "more than any other musical instrument, invites us to reflect upon matters beyond music" (Snyder, 2002, p. 1). Organs are exciting because they are not only very expensive instruments, which makes us wonder who commissioned them, but also technological artefacts of a particular age, and discussing the ways in which they are made can lead to insights into the practices of organ builders at the time. Next, these are also instruments which can reveal information about the geography – the place in which they are resurrected and the economics at this location – and "just as the organ prompts us to consider its geographical and historical placement, it also demands that we understand something about the physics of sound" (Snyder, p. 10). Organs, all in all, can be seen as instruments of knowledge which when studied can tell us something about society around the time they were

made, as "an organ is not a thing on its own, it is part of a culture of people at a certain place at a certain time" (Doesburg, 1996, p. 10).

With regards to studying radio, scholars in the field of STS (Science and Technology Studies) have pointed out that the 1930s are an exciting decade to research as these were the formative years of the medium and the time in which radio was "our central and acculturating and nationalizing influence" (Hilmes & Loviglio, 2002, p. 1). However, in academia, as Hilmes and Loviglio also argue, radio as a "permeation of our lives has gone remarkably unstudied" (p. 2), and when radio *is* studied, "radio historians have especially focused on the 1920s" (Douglas, p. 56). An extensive examination of what happened in the 1930s in the Netherlands is rare – and the texts which do exist are always from the viewpoint of one specific broadcasting company, and hardly mention the organs which were used on the radio.

In the Netherlands, radio has to be seen in the light of the pillarization of society in the 1930s. Since radio was organised differently compared to radio in the United States I will focus on other aspects of the medium compared to for instance Douglas and Hilmes & Loviglio, who mainly talk about commercial radio. They focus on economic consequences of radio (Douglas, p. 7), the role of radio in shaping social identities (both), or consumerism (Hilmes & Loviglio, p. xiii). I want to draw attention to an instrument which is actually being broadcast, the organ, and not focus neither on 'the radio' as a technology in itself, nor on the economic significance of the emergence of the radio as a mass medium, as I attempt to find out what the role of the theatre organ was in the continuing conflict between the AVRO and the VARA, and, again, relate this back to what is happening in the present.

Empirical data for this paper was gathered mostly through interviews. First, I conducted an interview with Rogier Hageman who works for the foundation responsible for the upkeep of the former VARA building and is involved with the restoration project which is currently being carried out in a more financial sense. Second, I interviewed Arie den Dikken, an organ fanatic, author of a book chapter on the former VARA building, and a man who worked for the

municipality for thirty years with regards to heritage sites. A possible limitation of interviews like this is that these are conversations with those who are directly involved, and may be biased, which is something one must keep in mind when analysing this kind of material. Next to this, archival material, consisting of newspaper clippings and articles ranging from the 1930s until around 1980 completes my investigations.

A Theatre Organ Culture in the 1930s

In the first half of this paper, I discuss the reasons behind the original construction of the Pierre Palla Organ and look at the theatre organ culture on the radio in the 1930s, followed by an examination of the building process of the theatre organ and the ways in which the instrument was used in this pre-world war II period. I focus on the role of the theatre organ in the Netherlands more with regards to the meaning that was attributed to this instrument and the place it had in society first, after which I look at the materiality of this instrument. In order to do so, it is important to consider what made the (theatre) organ suitable for being played on the radio in the first place, and give a brief overview of the history of the theatre organ.

In the 1920s, there were three types of organs: church organs, concert organs, and theatre organs. These were used for religious purposes, collaborations with orchestras or simply for entertainment. When it comes to the size and the disposition of these instruments, the church organ and the concert organ are closely related. The main difference is in the places where the organs were used, as a concert organ is usually adapted to fit a specific concert hall and differs from a church organ not so much in sound as it does in appearance. The theatre organ *is* unlike both the concert organ and the church organ. This particular instrument was originally developed by British organ builder Robert Hope-Jones to accompany silent films; he desired to make an organ which came as close to the sound of a whole orchestra with a single instrument as possible, which is why there are many more possibilities to create different kinds of sounds with the theatre organ.

Around 1920 the theatre organ started to be frequently used in the Netherlands, on the one hand as an instrument providing music to accompany films, and on the other hand for entertainment before and after the film and during the breaks in between films. In those days, rhythmic music was very popular and "hot jazz" was especially valued, so many theatre organs, like the Pierre Palla Organ, also had percussion elements installed (Doesburg, 1996, p. 18). The music played on the theatre organ had to be well-known to the audience; when classical music was played, it had to be rewritten to fit the instrument (Doesburg, 1996, p. 23). The theatre organ, all in all, was not seen as an instrument for serious musicking, and had a negative connotation attached to it, one could say.

When the silent film era ended, the theatre organ and the organists made the switch to radio. Figures show that in 1928 around 900 musicians were working in Dutch cinemas, a number which decreased significantly over the next few years. In 1930, 600 were left, while in 1933 this number had even further decreased into the dozens (K. Dibbets & F. van der Maden, 1986, p. 262). Radio meanwhile, had thrived following the division of broadcasting time despite the fact that there was a worldwide economic depression going on. Radio at that time "offered a relatively cheap means of information and entertainment" (Lacey, 2002, p. 24). In the Netherlands, like in America and the United Kingdom, radio boomed. Statistics show that about 140,000 people listened to Dutch radio in 1930, while a year later this figure had already risen to 430,000 (Wijfjes, 1994, p. 45). With regards to memberships, the VARA for instance had more members than the political party supporting it already in 1930: 67,674 against 61,162 (Wijfjes, 2009, p. 56). The organ and its players turned to radio and it was mainly the VARA who provided these unemployed musicians with the opportunity to demonstrate their worth. The VARA, for instance, was both the first company to play organ music and the first company to buy an actual organ. The reason for this was simple. As Arie den Dikken explains, the theatre organ as an instrument was both popular and it only required one musician to play, making it a cheap way to fill broadcasting time, much less expensive compared to having to hire an entire orchestra

(interview). This example can be used to illustrate again how the pillarization of society in the Netherlands had as a consequence that the VARA and the AVRO worked against each other in the late 1920s and early 1930s.

The first organ concert broadcast by the VARA took place in 1929; listeners heard Pierre Palla play a Wurlitzer theatre organ at the Tuschinski theatre in Amsterdam. The VARA was enthusiastic enough to make plans to engage the Tuschinski's orchestra on a permanent basis, and to broadcast organ music more often. However, the AVRO snatched up a deal with the Tuschinski Orchestra before the VARA was able to do so and offered a permanent position to Pierre Palla, which meant that the VARA had to look for an organist and an orchestra elsewhere. Consequently, the VARA accepted an offer by the Cinema Royal Theatre Orchestra, which had an organ made by the Standaart firm. This is how most listeners to the VARA got to know the theatre organ, an instrument which in the ears of the socialists offered "pure musical pleasure" (Doesburg, 1996, p. 305). However, when the VARA wanted to play organ music, they had to engage the Cinema Royal Theatre Orchestra and this was not always possible. The VARA therefore decided to buy an organ for their newly acquired (studio) villa in Hilversum.

The situation at the AVRO was completely different. When the theatre organ was first used on the radio, the use of the instrument was critiqued. Whereas VARA listeners were generally positive about the instrument, there was much criticism on the sound of the organ from the AVRO listeners, who favoured more serious music. For instance, some of the critiques talked about jazz as being played by black people who were "destroying white society" (Doesburg, 1996, p. 24) and the theatre organ was described as a "fair-ground like instrument" (Doesburg, 1996, p. 24). This again shows how the theatre organ was not taken serious as a musical instrument, and those who played the theatre organ were not considered serious musicians, and could therefore not be part of the musical elite at the time.

The main reason these critiques were ignored is that when the VARA built their very modern studio in 1932 containing a theatre organ, the AVRO, in their board meetings, started to

discuss the acquisition of a studio and an organ as well. As Doesburg writes, the plans for an AVRO organ appeared to have become more structured around this time (2013, p. 6). This again shows the rivalry between the AVRO and the VARA, and one could even go so far as to argue that the organs play a pivotal role in this conflict and can be seen as objects which listeners at the time related to a certain ideology. As Arie den Dikken for instance states about this rivalry: "I get the impression that it was mainly about the organs. The organs were very important for expressing the identities of the broadcasting companies" (interview).[1] Nevertheless, this role, apart from in this paper, is nowhere to be found in history books about the two broadcasting companies.

I now turn to the more material aspects of the Pierre Palla Organ and discuss the original construction of this instrument, and the way the organ was used from the 1930s onwards. It was decided at the time that the AVRO organ had to be an instrument fit to play both popular and more serious (classical) music, because, as AVRO director Vogt said: "[It] should serve as a concert-, church- and theatre organ and should truly be the best of what is available of this kind" (Cramer, den Dikken, Marx & Weltens, 2002, p. 150). It therefore had to be a combination of the three aforementioned organ types. Standaart, the biggest of the Dutch organ builders, was contacted, and they were asked to build two organs, a church organ and a theatre organ, which should also be able function as a concert organ. During the building process, however, Standaart went bankrupt and the AVRO had to look for another organ builder to complete the work, or rather continue the work. It is clear that the building process was not something which went smoothly, and could really be understood as a co-production in which different actors were involved which also "as an amalgam of social, cultural and economic factors can thus tell us much about music as a form of culture" (Peters, 2009, p. 6).

[1] Next to organs, studios and studio buildings are also very important for expressing the identity of a broadcasting company. This topic is discussed by Carole Fleming, who writes about "the identity of a radio station and how it is achieved – no matter whether a station is national or local, large or small, each has its own identity or brand designed to cater to a particular audience" (2002, p. 2). FF #2.

The AVRO hired John Compton, a British organ builder from Leicester, who worked according to Hope-Jones's principles to finish both the theatre organ and the church organ. The fact that Compton worked on the theatre organ much longer than Standaart has as a consequence the Pierre Palla Organ became a more advanced organ. For instance, Compton used a special electro-pneumatic technique in the relay chamber which gave his organs more possibilities to turn on and off individual (sub)instruments (*Compton Middelburg,* n.d.). Next to this, the sound of Compton's organs was also different (at first) from that of the (VARA's) Standaart organs, as Compton made an English Romantic sounding organ, which means that the sound was more mellow (Doesburg, 1996, p. 115). Pierre Palla was not satisfied with this instrument though, as he for example wanted an additional flute to make higher sounds possible, and wanted the organ to be tuned differently. This was done in 1941 by André Fonteijn, who also tuned the VARA organs and thus made the AVRO organ sound more like these organs. The question then is what remains today of the original sound as intended by Compton and how can this sound be restored?

When looking at the way the theatre organ was used from 1936 onwards, it is clear from literature and newspaper clippings that this organ functioned (almost) daily until the end of the 1940s. Radio schedules from the 1930s reveal that the organ was generally played (by Pierre Palla) two or three times a day, most often for thirty minutes, but sometimes for forty-five minutes, or even an hour at a time (*Wij Luisteren Naar*, 1936; *Wij Luisteren Naar (2),* 1936). At times there was an orchestra or a group of musicians playing together with the organ, while on other days the organ functioned as a solo instrument and could even be used to accompany radio dramas. The organ was well-known for being played every day at seven in the evening, when Henk de Wolf told children a bedtime story (*Het Klokje van Zeven…,* 1960). This lasted from 1938 until Pierre Palla retired in 1967, while the programme itself continued until 1970. Despite the fact that the organ was still used for this children's programme, in general, from the late 1940s onwards, both the AVRO and the VARA organs were used more and more infrequently, and with the

developments in popular music in the late 1950s and the early 1960s, the instrument was not considered appropriate anymore as a solo instrument on the radio. With the arrival of a third radio channel in Hilversum, one specifically designed to play popular music, the theatre disappeared off the radar, coupled with the fact that most of the organists retired or died before the 1960s were over.

The Reconstruction of the Pierre Palla Organ

After having discussed the role of the theatre organ in 1930s radio, the time has now come to look at what is happening in 2015, and what will happen in the summer of 2016, when the organ will be installed at the former VARA building (from now on MCO, *Muziekcentrum voor de Omroep* [Music centre for the broadcasting companies]). In short, I will study what Bijsterveld and Peters (2010) describe as "the reintroduction of musical instruments in the making" (p. 114). Of course, the first question which one could ask about the reintroduction of the Pierre Palla Organ is why this particular organ is reconstructed in the first place, considering that the restoration of the Pierre Palla Organ is roughly going to cost 1,3 million euros? Theatre organ music is not popular today, and the culture surrounding this instrument has mostly disappeared. Why then is this project being carried out?

In order to answer this question, I discuss the reasons behind the restoration with Rogier Hageman, who works for the foundation that owns the MCO and Arie den Dikken, who used to work for the municipality of Hilversum with regards to heritage sites. As den Dikken explains, in Studio 1 in the MCO a space was reserved for an organ, but an organ was never placed there. Now, almost fifty years later an organ is available, so why not install it there? Considering the organ is an official heritage site, it has to be contained in a protected building, which the MCO also is. Despite the struggle between the AVRO and the VARA in the past, the MCO thus fit the

profile for a possible location for the Pierre Palla Organ.[2] Naturally, the whole situation is not as simple as that and there is a long history which comes before all this. The project, according to den Dikken, actually started off from a very different premise. There were, as mentioned earlier, two AVRO organs: a church organ and a theatre organ. These were removed from the AVRO studio in 2000 and placed in storage without the municipality knowing about this. When it became clear what had happened a foundation was created in order to save the two organs. Money was raised and it was decided to restore the church organ and place this instrument in a local church. However, after a few years without progress the local governmental department responsible for heritage sites in Hilversum threatened to cut the funds if there was no breakthrough soon. The choice was made to sell the church organ to the organ builder and focus on the theatre organ instead as this was in den Dikken's words "the more popular organ" and if this organ would have been destroyed it can be considered tampering with "a unique piece of cultural heritage" (Doesburg, 2013, p. 49) – the uniqueness of this organ being its role in radio history coupled with the fact that there are no (theatre) organs in the Netherlands like the Pierre Palla Organ because of the way it was built – both containing material from Standaart, though very little, and Compton.

Rogier Hageman meanwhile made it clear that in his view the role of the past rivalry today is limited, and that this is why it is now considered acceptable to place the Pierre Palla Organ in the MCO, also because the institute is not bound to any broadcasting company

[2] In the early 1950s, the VARA wanted to expand their villa with the addition of a technical wing and foyer, a studio wing and restaurant, and several offices. In 1953, Merkelbach and Elling, architects, submitted plans for this. The VARA was keen on a refurbishment and expansion of the existing villa but the oldest parts of the building had to be respected (De Wagt, p. 320). The architect firm had to design an expansion of the VARA building which "could be linked to the social-democratic goals of the VARA" (De Wagt, 2008, p. 321). It had to be more than just a factory and different from the AVRO building, which was business-like and neutral, indicating it was meant to be a 'national' broadcasting company (De Wagt, p. 320). When Elling first drew the studio, the VARA decided to buy an organ previously used by the BBC, which was to be placed in this studio. This organ was temporarily used in a local church as a church organ and when the studio was finished the landscape had changed and taken a turn for the worst with regards to the theatre organ. The VARA decided sell the organ, though it is not known what exactly has happened to it since (den Dikken interview).

anymore. Even the name of the building is just an old-fashioned name. Of course all the orchestras tied to the different broadcasting companies use the studios, but as the building itself is owned by a foundation, it is perhaps not strange that historical remnants which belonged to the different companies are being brought together here. In addition, Hageman argues that as Pierre Palla and Cor Steyn, the AVRO organist and the VARA organist, were close friends, it would be acceptable to place the AVRO organ in a past VARA studio (interview). The possibility to reconstruct this instrument clearly takes precedence over the meaning attached to it in the past, as it is seen, at least by Hageman, more as a musical instrument – this is the meaning Hageman attributes to the organ today – than as a historical artefact which is tied to a certain ideology and it can thus be restored at the MCO without much discussion.

The overall purpose of the restoration of the Pierre Palla Organ is not to revive an old theatre organ culture but to create a new one, as mentioned earlier. den Dikken argues that it is therefore not necessarily a reconstruction project; in his view, the organ is going to be improved so it can have a use in the 21st century. What this use is or might is of course a central question. The goal of the project is to eventually spark the interest of young people, as there are not many young organists in the Netherlands. There is for instance with regards to theatre organs the Dutch organ federation (NOF) – they own four theatre organs – but generally only retired people go to their concerts. As den Dikken says: "There is nothing wrong with that, but when an organ gets placed in a modern building, of course we want young people to be more involved" (interview). The culture which surrounds the instrument is therefore not something which this project aims to revive. The goal is to restore an instrument in order for it to produce beautiful music, not to organise parties where people come in fancy dress, wearing bow ties, and dance: "The question is whether this will happen. Whether we can create a new culture structured around this instrument" (den Dikken interview). It has to be more about the music and the instrument than about the culture surrounding it.

The Pierre Palla Organ has to be the theatre organ to get young people interested in

organ music – not just theatre organ music, any organ music. In order to achieve this, the foundation responsible for the restoration of the instrument has a few projects in mind. First of all, concerts will be held. Second, there could be a Pierre Palla Award, for which young organists can compete. Additionally, there are young organists from other countries, such as the United States or England, who could be invited to play the organ. The most interesting aim of the reconstruction of the Pierre Palla Organ however is that it should also be an instrument to be practiced on and to be studied (Hageman interview). This ties in with the idea that the organ can be an instrument of knowledge. As Peters (2013) argues, "Church organs have always been instruments of knowledge. These sometimes ancient instruments can be compared to coral reefs, containing the material, scientific, and artistic sediments of ages" (p. 88). This could also be said about the Pierre Palla Organ, as this instrument can be used to educate young people about organ building in the past and in the present, and can also disclose something about the past rivalry between the AVRO and VARA. Mostly though, Peters discusses what he calls "research organs," which are replicas of historical instruments. In the case of the Pierre Palla Organ it is more of a reconstruction of an existing instrument than a replica which is being built yet one could still call this instrument a research organ. The reason for this is that this particular organ would in the future be made available for those interested in the theatre organ, as it is a prime example of that type of instrument, and unlike any other theatre organ which still exists in the Netherlands with regards to the size of the instrument and the role it played in radio history. All things considered, the Pierre Palla Organ today is seen by those involved in its reconstruction as a historical artefact, which should not be lost, but it is no longer tied to the AVRO specifically, and the meaning attributed to this instrument is different compared to how the organ was seen, and played a role in the 1930s.

It is important to more closely examine how the organ is going to be restored and what is going to be changed about this instrument in order to be able to make a comparison between how the organ was built in the 1930s compared to now. This has to do with the materiality of the

instrument: the building, design and uses it will have in the future. As den Dikken argues, there are going to be two major changes to the instrument – to make it more interesting for young people, but also because maintenance costs should be low. First of all, the relay technique is going to be altered. This has to do with the way the pressing of the key is transferred to the pipe. The old-fashioned way this is done now will be changed into a digital way. The sound will be the same, but the way the order is given for sound to be created which will be changed. Second, there will be a MIDI exit and that offers opportunities to for instance play the organ without a musician. The whole idea for the reconstruction is that the parts creating the organ sound are authentic but the ways in which the sound is transported through the instrument are new, which provides new possibilities to use the organ and to do more with the instrument. This kind of electronic interface, as Randall Harlow calls it "invites new genres of multi-instrumental or computer collaboration, as well as endless possibilities among new modalities of direct performance by agents removed from the organ keyboards. Advances in this kind of interfacing may hold the key for resurgence in the organ's esteem among art music in the 21st century" (2011, p. 40).

Another example of something which could be used to involve today's youth and aid in the possible creation of a new theatre organ culture, is the fact that as the organ is becoming a more digital instrument, it would be possible to create images, motion graphics, through playing the organ, which can then be shown on a screen during a concert, thus making this even more a unique instrument (den Dikken interview). The hope is that this could also be attractive for people who are interested in motion graphics, composers of sounds as well as images. This does not necessarily have to do with organ building directly, but as Harlow argues: "the concept of innovation has been associated with organ-building since the invention of the slider chest. Over the centuries and within diverse national traditions, organ design has continually reflected and affected the musical values of the time" (p. 47).

Returning to some of the parts of the organ which were innovative in the 1930s, I have

shown that the special relay technique used by Compton is now going to be replaced. Additionally, the changes discussed in the previous section of this paper made specifically for Pierre Palla are also going to be removed. den Dikken explains that the moment the organ left Compton's workshop, is the moment which is taken as the starting point for the reconstruction. The organ will be restored to this state, and subsequently altered for aforementioned purposes. The question raised earlier, concerning the sound of the organ as intended by Compton and how this sound can be restored is then answered, as by reconstructing the organ to the state in which it left Compton's workshop the original sound will also return. This coincides with the fact that this whole restoration project aims to make the organ useable, and not just as a theatre organ, which the alterations desired by Pierre Palla made it more compared to how Compton initially designed the instrument.

After having dealt with the changes which will be made to the instrument, the next question is what kind of music is going to be played on this instrument, and how this differs from the music played on the organ in the past. In den Dikken's view, the Pierre Palla Organ, when completely restored, should be seen as a hybrid organ. It is a normal pipe organ but it has unique sound effects and instruments contained within and can therefore be used in a variety of ways. It can play theatre organ music, but it could also be used to play classical music or church music. The MCO is mainly a centre for classical musicians, and the question then is: "What can we do with this popular instrument in a classical environment? Can an orchestra […] use this instrument as a classic organ?" (den Dikken interview). Hope-Jones, the inventor of the theatre organ, once argued that if the percussion instruments are not used, the theatre organ could function as a church organ. Of course these kinds of instruments were made according to Romantic principles, as this is how Hope-Jones worked, but that does not mean Bach cannot be played on a theatre organ. As den Dikken stresses: "You shouldn't say that you can only do it on a baroque organ" (interview). The organ will thus be used in different ways compared to how it was used in the past, when it mainly played popular music. This was mainly the case because there was also the

church organ. In the future situation there will only be the theatre organ and it is therefore reconfigured in a way which makes it suitable to play theatre organ music, classical music *and* church music.

The section of this paper concerned with the restoration of the Pierre Palla Organ has attempted to show that this project is not aimed at recreating or reviving an old theatre organ culture in the Netherlands. It is instead aimed at creating a new theatre organ culture and focused on trying to encourage young people to become part of this culture. The Pierre Palla Organ will be updated, modernised and will have more functions; it can be used in different ways compared to how the instrument was used in the past, and the digital aspects of the organ, it is hoped, should spark the interest of today's youth.

Conclusion

It has become clear throughout this paper that the theatre organ can be seen as an instrument of knowledge which can disclose something about past cultures when studied in relation to how and why this instrument was used and constructed originally. Studying the organ as a mirror of its time allows one to delve into the past in a particular way, focusing on all the actors involved in the production, design and use of the instrument, as well as focus on the meaning that is attached to an instrument. In addition, studying "the continuing process of restoring and rebuilding old organs" (Peters, 2010, p. 5) can also prove insightful, as a comparison can be made between the ways in which organs were originally constructed and how they are reconstructed. This paper has attempted to find out how and why the Pierre Palla Organ specifically is being restored compared to how the instrument was originally made.

I have in the first part of this essay for instance discussed on the one hand the reasons behind the construction of the Pierre Palla Organ and shown how the organ played a role in the rivalry between the AVRO and the VARA. On the other hand, it has also become clear that if it were not for this conflict, the Pierre Palla Organ would never have been made. In this section, I

have also examined the building process of the theatre organ and the ways in which the instrument was used in this pre-World War II period. However, from the second part of this paper it has become clear that this past is acknowledged but not necessarily recreated. This part of the paper can be used to illustrate what the aims are of the current reconstruction of the Pierre Palla Organ. It is clearly not the goal of this project to exactly replicate a past musical culture, but instead it is about reconfiguring an instrument which was part of a past musical culture, and about creating, if possible, a new musical culture surrounding this old instrument. The Pierre Palla Organ today is seen by those involved in its reconstruction as a historical artefact which should not be lost, though it is no longer tied to the AVRO necessarily, and the meaning attributed to this instrument is different compared to how the organ was seen, and played a role in the 1930s. It is now becoming a more business-like, hybrid instrument which is updated and reconfigured in order to have a use in our current digital age. Whether the reconfigured Pierre Palla Organ will actually be able to create a new theatre organ culture in the Netherlands is something which remains to be seen.

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