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Grand Rapids AGO
2007-2008

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THE CIPHER

The Monthly Newsletter of the Grand Rapids Chapter
American Guild of Organists

February 2008

From the Dean

Duo Majoya's excellent concerts and workshops last month, both for the Calvin Symposium on Worship and for GRAGO, brought back some pleasant memories. I must admit, however, that as a young church organist and recitalist, I avoided any combination of piano and organ. I wanted to be in complete control of the hymn singing and believed that the prelude, postlude, and offertory should be the sole domain of the organ. I still believe that the two instruments do not blend well. As Joachim Seeger mentioned, one is basically a legato instrument; the other is percussive. The compatibility of tuning is also a problem. But something happened to change my attitude.

I got married.

At first, Marilyn and I gave recitals separately. But as our teaching and family responsibilities grew, we chose to give half-recitals—together. We played a recital of the music of Bach in the Calvin Chapel about two decades ago, and thought it fitting to play something together. We decided on Myra Hess's transcription of "Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring." Marilyn played the orchestral part with the running triplets; I played the chorale sections. It worked well, and solved the dual problem of conflicting touch and tuning. The same is true of the Steuermann arrangement of the Siciliano movement from the Bach Flute Sonata. The flute solo and continuo chords are on the organ. The pianist plays the broken chords of the keyboard part.

Since then we have played together at the weddings and funerals of family and friends, and even gave one complete organ/piano concert at Central Reformed Church. We use a combination of our own arrangements and published two-piano literature, and have played very little published piano/organ literature. (One important exception is the "Prelude, Fugue, and Variation" of Cesar Franck, which he originally wrote for organ and piano. It is marvelous.) We always try to use repertoire that makes a happy "marriage" possible, for the pair of instruments and for the two performers.

Howard Slenk, Dean



Our February Meeting



On Monday night, February 18, we welcome Tom Trenney, Director of Music Ministries and Organist at First Presbyterian Church, Birmingham, Michigan.

He has been awarded First Prize at several regional and national competitions, including the Redlands Organ Festival Competi-

tion, the San Marino Organ Competition, the John Rodland Memorial Church Music Scholarship Competition, and the AGO Region V Competition for Young Organists. In July of 2006, Tom became the first organist to win both the First Prize and Audience Prize in the American Guild of Organists' National Competition in Organ Improvisation.

Some of us heard him at Central Reformed Church on New Year's Eve, and he was a featured clinician and organist at the Calvin Symposium on Worship in January. So we're glad to welcome him back to Grand Rapids.

Tom's topic is "*ABRACADABRA--uncovering the magic of musical improvisation.*" What a great player he is! I'm sure you'll all agree that he is not only a tremendously talented musician—not only as an organist, but also pianist, choral conductor, and he also sings!—but also in his winsome personality. He is down to earth and communicates well to people of all levels of playing.

Our meeting will be at **Immanuel Lutheran Church**, 2 Michigan NE—on the "Medical Mile." As usual, punch at 6:30 and dinner at 7:00. You will be called for a dinner reservation, or call it in yourself to Errol Shewman (456-9232) by Wednesday, February 13.

Introducing New Members

Don Haan is a local organ builder and servicer of organs. He and his associate Guy VanderWagen have worked together for the past thirty-three years. As a teenager, Don had a fascination and appreciation for pipe organs. In the late 1960's he had an opportunity to be employed by a small organ builder in Hudsonville, and later worked for the American Organ Supply in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, a supply source for Aeolian-Skinner. Don was on the installation crew at American and helped finish the last three instruments Aeolian-Skinner built. Later, he took over all the service work George Groot had had in the state and became associated with the Schantz Co. of Orrville, Ohio. At the present time Don and Guy VanderWagen service over 100 instruments in the West Michigan area from Petoskey to south of the Indiana line. Their main interests are general service and tuning work, including overhauls and tonal additions to instruments.

Tim Quist has degrees in Organ from Calvin College and Michigan State University. He was an active church musician in Grand Rapids and East Lansing for many years. After a ten year absence from the church music scene, due to becoming an elementary school principal, he has become a bit more active again. Tim teaches fourth and fifth grade at Evergreen Christian School, and, as a licensed builder, does finish carpentry in his spare time.

Bill Swem has tuned and maintained many of the pipe organs in Western Michigan in the past thirty-four years. His grandfather Donald started the company in 1954 after working for the Michigan Organ Company. His son, also named Don, worked with him for several years. Bill grew up in the trade working weekends and summers. After college he assumed ownership of the company. He has also been trained in carpentry, fine woodworking, metalworking, heating and air conditioning, electrical and electronics, plumbing, drafting, many of which are used in the organ trade. The Swem Organ Company also relocates, rebuilds, and provides additions to current organs. Bill builds and rebuilds more than organs. He installed the clock at Cornerstone University, was involved with the clock at Grand Valley University, and restored the bells at Saint Andrew's Cathedral.

Events of Interest

Music at Mid-Day on Tuesdays from 12:15-12:45 p.m., at Park Congregational Church, 10 East Park Place NE.

- Feb. 5 - Cameo Haaksma Elsinga, piano
- Feb. 12 - Janet & Kent Hill, organ
- Feb. 19 - Jimmy Leach, trumpet; Francis Zajac, organ
- Feb. 26 - Jonathan Tuuk, organ

Saturday, February 9, at 7:30 p.m., organ recital by **Martin Mans** from **Woerden, the Netherlands**, at **First United Methodist Church**, 227 East Fulton St. Tickets \$5.00 per person or \$12 per family available at the door. (*He is also performing on Friday night, Feb. 8 at Dimment Chapel in Holland, at 7:30 p.m.*)

Sunday, February 10, 4:00 p.m. Recital by Paul Jacobs at **St. Lorenz Lutheran Church, 1030 W. Tuscola Rd., Frankenmuth, MI (989-652-6141)** He is also leading a **Master Class on Monday, Feb. 11, at 11:00 a.m.**: "Through a generous gift from the Leona Geyer Foundation, we are able to hold this master class free of charge. Organists of all ages and abilities are welcome. Those organists wishing to play must contact Scott Hyslop, director of Parish Music at St. Lorenz, prior to the class. All are welcome!"

Sunday, February 10, 5:00p.m. An evening choral service at **Twelfth Avenue Christian Reformed Church**, 7581 12th Ave., Jenison. A 50-voice choir from 12th Ave. and the Ridgewood Christian Reformed Church will be assisted by brass, timpani and organ. Organist **Chris Dekker** will begin the prelude at 4:45; the postlude will include Henri Mulet's *Tu Es Petra* (*Thou Art the Rock*).

Sunday, Feb. 10 at 7:30 p.m. February 10, 2008 at 7:30 p.m. A recital for organ and trumpet, with Michael Bloss, organist, and Pamela Smitter Baker, trumpeter, at Central Reformed Church, Fulton at College in Grand Rapids. Ms. Baker is Principal Trumpet in the West Shore Symphony Orchestra, a section trumpet in the Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra, and well-known to West Michigan audiences as a solo performer. Michael Bloss, formerly of Grand Rapids, is currently Director of Music Ministry at Dublin Street United Church in Guelph, Ontario.

Sunday, Feb. 17 at 2:00 p.m. at St. Luke's United Methodist Church, located at 100 West 86th Street, Indianapolis, IN. *Pipedreams* host **Michael Barone** will present "*Pipedreams Live!*" at the 2nd annual Indianapolis Pipe Organ Festival. The program will feature

music for solo organ, organ with instruments, and even the world premiere of a brand new composition! Sponsored by the Indianapolis Chapter of the AGO. Admission is \$10, with tickets available at the door the day of the event.

Sunday, Feb. 17 at 4:00 p.m. at Park Congregational Church. A free organ recital by **Adrian Lucas**, Organist & Master of the Choristers, Worcester Cathedral, England.

Friday, Feb. 22, at 4:00 p.m. at LaGrave Ave. Church, "Songs of Pain, Protest, Gratitude, and Celebration: A Tapestry of Classical, Global, Gospel Psalmody" with John Witvliet, clinician and Valparaiso University Chorale, Christopher M. Cock, director. This event is part of the 2008 ACDA Central Division convention held in Grand Rapids, February 20-23, 2008. Limited seating due to the many choral conductors coming.

Advance Notices

Tom Trenney, our February clinician, sent the following note:

On behalf of *Many Voices...One Song*, it is my pleasure to introduce our upcoming church music workshop, which will be held following our Holy Week and Easter rush, April 18-20, 2008. Nearly 300 singers (adults, children, and youth!), ringers, organists, conductors, clinicians gathered last year for this exciting event, and we anticipate a similar crowd this year. The workshop is one of *Many Voices...One Song's* most important annual events that supports our mission: sharing music to build community. You will find details, photographs and descriptions of the clinicians at <http://www.fpcbirmingham.org/new/music/workshop.htm>

Pipe Organ Encounter at Hope College, July 6-11, 2008

Congratulations to the Holland AGO Chapter, who will host the AGO Region V Pipe Organ Encounter (POE), July 6-11, 2008, at Hope College! Our thanks go especially to Elizabeth Claar, member of our chapter as well as Dean of the Holland Chapter, for spearheading this effort. POE events are for youth who are 13-18 years of age. Please consider young people you know who would benefit from POE and contact our Executive Committee with their names. Our chapter will once again be providing scholarships for this program. For more information on this program, see www.agohq.org/education/indexoutreach.html.

CD of LaGrave Organ Favorites



Larry Visser announces the release of a new organ CD entitled "LaGrave Organ Favorites." The recording features pieces played on Larry's Spring, 2007 recital at LaGrave Avenue Christian Reformed Church celebrating the tenth anniversary of the installation of the organ, including Widor's "Tocatta from Symphony

No. 5," Dupre's "Cortege et Litanie," Barber's "Adagio for Strings," Virgil Fox's arrangements of Bach's "Come, Sweetest Death, Come, Blessed Rest," and "Now Thank We All Our God," Vierne's "Carillon de Westminster," two pieces by Larry Visser, "Partita on CRYSTAL," and "What Wondrous Love Is This" and more! This new recording is available for purchase (\$15.00 includes shipping) by emailing Larry (lvisser@lagrave.org) with your order, or by stopping by the church office during regular business hours (M-F, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.). *If you order directly from Larry before our February meeting, come with a check and he'll come with your CD! The CDs are also available at the Calvin College Bookstore and Schuler's Books and Music.*

Pipe Dreams Celebrating 25 Years

From American Public Media, *Pipedreams* is public radio's weekly program dedicated to the artistry of the pipe organ. Host Michael Barone's celebration of the "king of instruments" is heard on NPR stations nationwide; in our area on Blue Lake Public Radio (88.9 for GR, 90.3 for Muskegon and the Lake Shore) on Sunday mornings at 7:00 a.m. Visit www.pipedreams.org to locate other broadcast stations. The website also provides complete program information. Here are the programs for February:

- F ebruary 04, 2008: [In the Spotlight](#) (#0805)
- F ebruary 11, 2008: [The Spirit of Youth](#) (#0806)
- F ebruary 18, 2008: [The English Concerto](#) (#0807)
- F ebruary 25, 2008: [A Musical Menagerie](#) (#0808)

Position Opening

Choir Director and Worship Leader needed at St. Luke's Lutheran Church, 3215 4 Mile Rd, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

- Play piano, keyboard, and/or organ for Sunday worship.
- Direct the Worship Team. This includes rehearsing the Worship Team, communicating Team activities, and assisting pastors and Coordinator of Music with selection of music and recruitment of Team members.
- Direct the Adult Choir(s). This includes selection, purchase, and organization of music for the Adult Choir(s), communication of choir activities, and recruitment of choir members.
- Provide instruction as necessary and appropriate to the Adult Choir(s) to improve knowledge and skills in choral, vocal and instrumental techniques, music appreciation, leadership and participation in worship.
- Annually provide budget information and recommendations for music ministry to the Worship and Music Committee

For more information contact Kim Owens, coordinator of music ministries at St. Luke's, by phone (616-363-2381) or email (kimowens21@yahoo.com).

A Lenten Note from One of Our Advertisers

The chorale "Freu dich sehr, O meine Seele" (also called Psalm 42) has been arranged for organ by John David Peterson, Professor of Music at Memphis State University. It is very appropriate for Lent; here is a brief explanation of the piece for the Sunday bulletin: The piece opens with the lovely chorale melody and then near the bottom of the second page, the tempo quickens with rich, sharply accented chords that remind me of the crowd that followed Jesus when he was carrying the cross to Golgotha for his crucifixion. The final section is played slowly with two dissonant pedal notes played together against the melody. The final two measures go into a major key, and the piece ends softly with a feeling of peace. ("It is finished." John 20:30).

If you would like to order this 3-page piece, check out the L.K. Drew advertisement in your chapter Yearbook/Directory; other pieces are also listed there.

- Joyce Hemenger, Past Dean, Dayton, OH AGO Chapter & owner of L.K. Drew Pub. Co. Music@LKDREW.COM