

September 2014

The Grand Rapids Chapter of the American Guild of Organists presents...

THE CIPHER

GRAGO's Comprehensive Program for Encouraging Young Organists (Guest Editorial by Bruce Klanderman, Chairman of the GRAGO Scholarship Committee)

Mark Your Calendars

September Meeting
at Hope College
(see page 2)

Over the last several years our Grand Rapids chapter of the American Guild of Organists has been putting together the pieces of a comprehensive five-part program for the development of young organists. Our chapter can be proud of the growing number of options for promoting young organists. This multi-faceted program rivals the best programs that may be offered by any other chapter in the AGO.

The Pipelines program for grade school children introduces children to the pipe organ and gives them an opportunity to experience first-hand how the pipe organ works and the wide variety of sounds that the organ produces. Shirley Boomsma, who recently passed away, was one of the founders of this program which takes place each fall at Central Reformed Church, whose organist plays a major role in the execution of the presentations.

The Summer Organ Event (SOE) is designed to encourage high school students with good piano skills to consider the pipe organ. Bob Houskamp started this program in 2013 with two students; in 2014 there were four. SOE provides an introduction to the organ on a tracker organ, then more intense study on a large instrument with many voices, followed by experience with an instrument in a church with wonderful acoustics. A session with a theatre organ was included for balance, and then a closing session is held where students can ask questions and get specific advice for practice on their own and follow-up instruction. All music is provided. Each student receives more than five hours of instructor contact provided this year by Norma de Waal Malefyf, Brian Bartusch, Peter Kurdziel, Dale Zieger, and John Tiemstra.

The Shirley Boomsma Scholarship for Young Organists was established after Shirley's death earlier this year. The funds will be invested with the financial gains used for helping a young organist each year to attend one of the Pipe Organ Encounters (POEs) established by the AGO. So far we have collected over \$5000 for this fund. If you have not yet made a contribution, you are encouraged to support this new effort of our chapter.

The Annamae Rotman Competition for Young Organists was established by Dr. Richard Rotman, one of our members, to promote further achievements of local young organists. The first of these annual competitions was held this past April with prizes of \$1000 and \$500. This year an additional prize of \$250 will be awarded to a student organist in junior or senior high school if such students compete. Be sure to encourage any promising pre-college student to enter as well as local college students.

The American Guild of Organists / Quimby Chapter Competition for Young Organists is offered by our chapter every other year as the first step in the national AGO/Quimby competition for advanced organ students. The winner competes later in the year in the regional competition, and the regional winner participates the following year in the national AGO convention. The prizes for this competition are \$1000 and \$500. The co-coordinators for both the Quimby and Rotman competitions this coming year are Bruce Klanderman and Joan Ringerwole.

Our chapter can be proud of our multi-level program for encouraging and supporting young organists. Let us all do our part in whatever way we can to support these initiatives, whether it be financial contributions, page turners, practice monitors, or other supporting tasks needed for these efforts.



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Dimnent Chapel
Hope College

OUR SEPTEMBER MEETING IS AT HOPE COLLEGE IN HOLLAND

The Holland AGO chapter is looking forward to hosting the regional installation of Officers this year. The service will be on Monday, September 15, at 7:30 PM. The Muskegon, Grand Rapids and Holland chapters will be joining together for this event. We will begin with a meal together beforehand.

The service will follow in Hope College's Dimnent Chapel. The installation service will feature The West Michigan Children's Choir. Organists will include Dr. Huw Lewis, Hope students Aaron Goodyke and David Heinze, and chapter dean Rhonda Edgington. Rev. Jen Adams of Grace Episcopal will be preaching.

The optional meal will be at Semelink Hall at Western Theological Seminary, on the Hope College Campus. 5:30 gathering time and punch bowl. Dinner 6-7 PM. There will be a Pasta Buffet, grilled chicken, salad, vegetables, fruit, bread, drinks, and dessert. (A gluten free option is available upon request. If you opt for this, be sure to mention it when making your reservation.) The cost of the meal is \$15. Members are asked to RSVP by September 10.

GRAGO members should call 526-8587 and register their name and meal preference prior to Wednesday, September 10. If you cancel after September 10, the Holland Chapter requests that you reimburse them for your dinner, since they will have to pay for it once your reservation has been made.

See you then!

*"I play the notes as
they are written,
but it is God who
makes the music." -
Johann Sebastian
Bach*

AGO COMPETITION ANNOUNCEMENTS

On behalf of the National Competitions Committee, I write to announce the **2015 AGO/Quimby Regional Competitions for Young Organists (RCYO)** and **2016 National Competition in Organ Improvisation (NCOI)**.

As a representative of your school's organ program, I encourage you to forward and share this message with your students and colleagues.

Reflecting the outcomes of the 2013 Competitions Review Process, the procedure for each of these important Guild programs has evolved.

Many thanks for your help in distributing this information, and I send every best wish for the academic year. Please don't hesitate to be in touch should you have questions.

Sincerely,

Chris Lane



Please see pages 4 & 6 for brief descriptions and the October 2014 issue of *The American Organist* for full details on each competition.

SCHOLARSHIP RECOGNITION LETTER

I would like to thank the Grand Rapids AGO Scholarship committee for providing me a scholarship to attend the Organ Scholar Training Course put on by the Royal School of Church Music in Newport, RI. This course allowed me first-hand experience in the life of an organ scholar. I had the opportunity to play for rehearsals and major services as well as accompanying Anglican chant, which was a new experience for me. I was attracted to this course because of the quality of the organ scholar program which allowed four other young organists to share the duties of a typical organ scholar. The camaraderie of this small group was strong, supportive, and allowed us to give insight and constructive criticism to each other. Another facet of this course that I enjoyed was the ability to network with other organists (young and old) and choral leaders in the East Coast. As I am about to finish my final year at St. Olaf College, I had the chance to talk with many different people about numerous options for my post-graduation plans.

By giving me this scholarship, this guild not only acknowledges my vocation as a church musician and organist, but more importantly you show an interest in preparing the legacy of the upcoming organists and church musicians. The Grand Rapids AGO is ensuring excellence in organ performance and church music in the Grand Rapids area for the years to come. Hopefully this attitude of generosity and interest in continuing excellence in organ performance continues in the coming years.

Again, I would like to thank you for the scholarship that allowed me to attend the RSCM Organ Scholar Training Course. Your investment in the next generation of organists in the Grand Rapids AGO is noticed and greatly appreciated!

Thank you,

Matthew Bacon
St. Olaf College

Matthew Bacon is a senior at St. Olaf College and plans on receiving his Bachelor of Music degree with a double major in church music and organ performance this Spring. He studies under James E. Bobb and has special interest in improvisation in regards to congregational song. Prior to his studies at St. Olaf, Matthew received an Associates of Arts at Grand Rapids Community College with membership in Pi Theta Kappa and Delta Pi Alpha. He is the Director of Parish Music and Organist at All Saints Episcopal Church Northfield, MN and this summer he was Interim Director of Traditional Music and Organist at First Presbyterian Church Grand Junction, CO. Matthew has been a member of the Grand Rapids AGO since 2010.



Matthew Bacon

“...acknowledges my vocation as a church musician and organist...”



All Saints Episcopal Church in Northfield, MN



AMERICAN GUILD OF ORGANISTS

CHAPTERS IN EVERY STATE

Chartered 1896 by the Board of Regents, University of the State of New York

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

475 Riverside Drive, Suite 1260, New York, NY 10115; phone 212-870-2310; www.agohq.org

2016 National Competition in Organ Improvisation

The National Competition in Organ Improvisation seeks to further the art of improvisation by recognizing and rewarding superior performances in the field and by promoting improvisation pedagogy as an integral part of the consummate musician. A flourishing tradition of improvisation is fundamental to a truly vital musical culture.

PURPOSE

The competition, while promoting the highest levels of improvisatory performance, seeks also to draw connections between the art of improvisation and:

- its historical connections to the creation and development of repertoire;
- its collaborative possibilities; and
- its use in service playing.

The structure of this competition recognizes that improvisation is not simply art of the present. Rather, many of the best improvisations result from intentional cultivation of an individual's musical imagination and are achieved when working with themes well known and purposefully selected.

Throughout this competition, competitors are encouraged to explore different historical styles of improvisation, but are not required to perform in specific historical styles. Instead, the environment, the instrument, and the competitor's own musical voice will each inform a performance.

COMPETITION RULES

I—ELIGIBILITY AND REGISTRATION

The competition is open to all organists regardless of age or citizenship. First-place winners of previous AGO improvisation competitions are not eligible. Each competitor will complete the official online application form and submit it along with the application fee (\$75 for AGO members; \$125 for nonmembers). The application must be submitted at Agohq.org by December 1, 2014.

Please note: A competitor may be disqualified at any time for failure to abide by these rules or for actions deemed to be in conflict with the spirit of the competition. Such disqualification will be made by common agreement between the NCOI leadership and the Executive Director of the AGO, in consultation with the AGO Vice President.

II—PRELIMINARY ROUND

The preliminary round is by recording. The recording must be made between January 1 and January 31, 2015, and monitored by an approved proctor such as an AGO officer, a teacher, or a recording engineer. The competitor is responsible for selecting the instrument and obtaining a proctor. The proctor will make four CD copies of the recording and submit them to AGO National Headquarters, postmarked not later than February 3, 2015. A field of no more than five semifinalists will be announced on or before March 15, 2015.

Performance Requirements

1. Perform one of the following repertoire selections, from any Urtext edition:

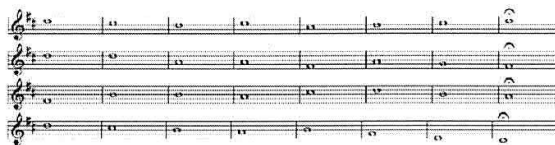
Samuel Scheidt: Variationen (Cantio sacra) *Warum betrübst du dich, mein Herz, SSWV 106 (any eight of the twelve variations)*
 Heinrich Scheidemann: *Magnificat VI. Toni (Verses 1 and 2 only)*
 Franz Tunder: Chorale Fantasy *In dich hab ich gehoffet, Herr*
 Dieterich Buxtehude: *Magnificat primi toni, BuxWV 203*

2. Realize a given thoroughbass. (30 minutes preparation)
3. Realize two contrasting harmonizations of a given cantus firmus (30 minutes preparation):

a. Treat the c.f. as soprano solo (separate manual) in the r.h., with the l.h. playing alto and tenor on an accompanying registration, and the pedal playing the bass.

b. Place the c.f. as a solo in the tenor (solo l.h.) or bass voice (solo pedal), filling in the harmony with the r.h. and either tenor or bass. Note that if the solo is in the bass, the c.f. should function as the bass in the harmony.

4. Improvise five contrasting variations on this theme (5–7 minutes):



5. A free improvisation on a given theme (5–7 minutes). (30 minutes preparation)

Proctor's Responsibilities

- Attend the entire recording session, with no other audience members permitted except a recording engineer. A page turner may additionally be present, if needed, for the repertoire portion only.
- Make sure all recording equipment is working properly with a brief trial recording before giving the themes to the competitor.
- Receive the themes and proctor's form from the competition administrator and give them to the competitor 30 minutes before the recording session begins. The competitor *may* play the organ during this 30-minute period, and, per the competitor's wishes, the period need not last fully 30 minutes.
- During the 30-minute preparation, competitors may sketch a contrasting theme and/or blueprint for a form, but may not compose specific full harmonies; the proctor examines all papers at the console to ensure compliance before the recording session begins.
- Ensure the CD is high-quality, continuous, unedited, and free from background noise or other imperfections that would impair its effectiveness.
- Verify that all four CDs are properly labeled, as instructed by the administrator, and playable on standard playback equipment.
- Send the recordings, proctor's form, and themes to AGO Headquarters. The proctor's form will certify that the recording session was properly monitored and that the recording's quality and playability have been confirmed.

III—SEMIFINAL ROUND

No more than five semifinalists will participate in the Semifinal Round, which will be held on Wednesday, July 1, 2015, at First United Methodist Church, Charlotte, North Carolina, in conjunction with the Southeast AGO Regional Convention (organ specification here: <http://goo.gl/DgeDIC>). AGO Headquarters, under the guidance of the Executive Director, will provide each semifinalist a travel allowance and a housing allowance (for the duration of the competition period); additionally, each competitor will be provided complimentary convention registration.

All competitors must avoid the competition site outside of the appointed orientation, practice, and performance times, except for official AGO convention events. Each competitor will practice alone. Except for an AGO Competitions Committee-approved person who may

demonstrate combinations of the competitor's choice and/or provide registration assistance on instruments with no pistons, no one may listen to or accompany the competitor during practice sessions. Each competitor will receive no less than three hours of practice time on the competition instrument in the days preceding the round. Immediately before the competition, each competitor will be allotted 30 minutes to consider the given themes with access to a piano. During this time, competitors may sketch a contrasting theme and/or blueprint for a form, but not compose specific full harmonies; all papers carried to the console will be examined to ensure compliance. For notated repertoire, a page turner will be provided as needed.

Performance Requirements

1. Perform one of the following selections:

- Jean Langlais: Ave Maria. Ave Maris Stella (*Trois Paraphrases Grégoriennes*, Op. 5)
- Marcel Dupré: Nativité (*Symphonie-passion*, Op. 23)
- Charles-Marie Widor: Choral (*Symphonie romane*, Op. 73)

2. Perform the following:

- Olivier Messiaen: Joie et clarté des corps glorieux (*Les corps glorieux*)

3. Lead the audience in the singing of a hymn, with a creative introduction and all stanzas. Offer at least two contrasting harmonizations and creative text painting. (Three days preparation)

4. Improvise a lyrical Adagio based on a given theme (4–7 minutes in length). (30 minutes preparation)

5. Improvise a Prelude, Toccata, or Fantasia on a given theme (5–8 minutes in length). (Three days preparation)

IV—FINAL ROUND

No more than three finalists will participate in the Final Round, which will be held on Tuesday, June 21, 2016, at Christ Church Cathedral, Houston, Texas, in conjunction with the 2016 AGO National Convention (organ specification here: <http://goo.gl/2LOzIr>). AGO Headquarters, under the guidance of the Executive Director, will provide each finalist a travel allowance and a housing allowance (for the duration of the competition period); additionally, each competitor will be provided complimentary convention registration.

All competitors must avoid the competition site outside of the appointed orientation, practice, and performance times, except for official AGO convention events. Each competitor will practice alone. Except for an AGO Competitions Committee-approved person who may demonstrate combinations of the competitor's choice and/or provide registration assistance on instruments with no pistons, no one may listen to or accompany the competitor during practice sessions. Each competitor will receive no less than three hours of practice time on the competition instrument in the days preceding the round. Immediately before the competition, each competitor will be allotted 30 minutes to consider the given themes, with access to a piano. During this time, competitors may sketch a contrasting theme and/or blueprint for a form, but not compose specific full harmonies; all papers carried to the console will be examined to ensure compliance. For notated repertoire, a page turner will be provided as needed.

Performance Requirements

1. Perform a technically challenging American work composed after January 1, 2000. This work is limited to 10 minutes duration and is the competitor's choice. Finalists should submit their chosen work for approval to the Competitions Committee by March 1, 2016.

2. Realize a thoroughbass in collaboration with a soloist (approximately 10 minutes in length). The committee-appointed soloist will perform with each of the three finalists, and will be available for rehearsal prior to the competition round. (Three days preparation)

3. Lead the audience in the singing of a hymn, with a creative introduction and all stanzas. Offer at least two contrasting harmonizations and creative text painting. (30 minutes preparation)

4. Improvise a four-movement sonata or symphony on given themes (20 minutes maximum). (Three days preparation)

Incorporated within at least one of the four movements shall be the following formal components or attributes:

- sonata-allegro form
- a fugue
- a fast movement
- a slow movement

V—DELIVERY OF THEMES

Reflecting the competition's Purpose, improvisation themes are provided to competitors at varying intervals: some are provided 30 minutes prior to a competitor's performance; some are provided fully three days in advance, allowing for deeper study and artistic illumination; and, in the case of the Preliminary Round, one theme is provided with the publication of these rules, allowing for a substantive period of exploration and experimentation.

In all cases, a competitor may only sketch contrasting themes and/or blueprints for forms on paper, but may not compose specific full harmonies. All paper carried to the console at the time of performance is examined, to ensure compliance.

VI—ADJUDICATION

The preliminary round is evaluated by three judges in strict anonymity. No judge may be a current teacher of the applicant. Judges might be drawn from members of the Competitions Committee for this round. Judges keep written documentation of their evaluation; competitors are provided copies of scores and/or comments.

The semifinal round is evaluated by a panel of five judges, screened from viewing the performer. Judges may not have regularly taught a competitor in the previous three years. Competitors receive signed, written comments.

The final round is evaluated by a panel of seven judges, two of whom may be non-organists (such as a local music critic or other experienced listener). The adjudicators are free to view this public performance along with the audience, and there are no restrictions on a juror's relationship to any competitor. Each jury member will provide signed, written comments to the competitors. The winner is determined by simple majority vote of the jury; subsequently, second prize and then third prize are likewise determined by vote of the jury. The jury reserves the right to withhold any or all prizes.

VII—GENERAL JUDGING CRITERIA

The judges' criteria for performance evaluation in all three rounds shall emphasize:

- Thematic use and development. Development of portions of the theme is acceptable.
- Harmonic integrity.
- Clear presentation of form.
- Timing as appropriate to style, form, development, and contrast.
- Stylistic consistency.
- Rhythmic integrity and interest.
- Intentional direction and melodic/linear contour.
- Effective use of the instrument—e.g., registration, range, texture.
- Sophisticated use of imitative counterpoint.
- Expression and communicative performance.

VIII—PRIZES

Awards for the Final Round

First Prize

- \$3,000, provided by McNeil Robinson
- An invitation to perform during the 2018 AGO National Convention in Kansas City
- A CD recording on the Pro Organo label
- Eight 1/6-page display ads in THE AMERICAN ORGANIST (design costs not included)

Second Prize

- \$2,000, provided by Dobson Pipe Organ Builders
- Four 1/6-page advertisements in THE AMERICAN ORGANIST (design costs not included)

Third Prize

- \$1,500, provided by Pamela and Steven Ruiter-Feenstra
- Four 1/6-page advertisements in THE AMERICAN ORGANIST (design costs not included)

Audience Prize

- \$1,500, provided by Robin and David Arcus

The Executive Committee of the
Grand Rapids AGO
2014–2015

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The purpose of the American Guild of Organists is to promote the organ in its historic and evolving roles, to encourage excellence in the performance of organ and choral music, and to provide a forum for mutual support, inspiration, education, and certification of Guild members. Members of the American Guild of Organists are bound by the Code of Ethics and guided by the Code of Standards.

ADVERTISING IN THE CIPHER

If you would like to advertise an event in the CIPHER, please send it Michael Adams (madams@jp2cedarsprings.org). The CIPHER is published monthly around the beginning of the month. If you have photos you would like to include please send them as well as they would be most appreciated.

Thank you!

UPCOMING GRAGO PROGRAMS

Monday, October 20, 2014—October Meeting

The Music of Leo Sowerby at St. Mark's Episcopal Church. The Grand Rapids Choir of Men and Boys. Organists will be Gregory Crowell, Jonathan Tuuk, and Bruce Klanderaman.

Wednesday, November 5, 2014—Pipelines

Each November, fourth-graders from a different quadrant of our greater Grand Rapids area are invited to this entertaining and informative presentation by many fine area organists performing on the five-manual, 81-rank, organ at Central Reformed Church. This program is underwritten by the Anne Heyboer Vander Heide Fund of the Grand Rapids Foundation.

Friday, November 28, 2014—Young Artist Concert

Nicholas Quardokus, the winner of the 2013 Quimby Regional Competition for Young Organists for Region V of the AGO will present this program. A Workshop for Young Organists will be held at Mayflower Congregational Church with Nicholas Quardokus the following day at 10:30AM on November 29.

There is no meeting in December so as to allow time for members to celebrate the holiday season with their family and friends.

Look for more exciting programs in the GRAGO Chapter Directory!