

October 2014

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

THE CIPHER

Sowerby in Grand Rapids

(Guest Editorial by Gregory Crowell, Music Director of St. Mark's Episcopal Church)

Mark Your Calendars
for the
October Program on
Monday, October 20
(see page 3)

Biographers of the composer Leo Sowerby (1895–1968) usually glide over the obligatory mention of Grand Rapids as his place of birth on their way to more detailed discussions of his adult years in Chicago and Washington, D.C. But the fact remains that Grand Rapids in general and St. Mark's Episcopal Church in particular remained an important part of his development as a person and as a composer throughout his life. His very first taste of professional music-making would no doubt have been at St. Mark's, where a fine boys' choir held forth every Sunday, accompanied by the 1867 Odell organ that survives to this day in Emmanuel Episcopal Church in Hastings, Michigan. (This organ was replaced in 1909 by an Austin organ, which the young Sowerby would also have known.)

Though Sowerby moved to Chicago at a young adult, his connections to Grand Rapids remained deep. Among his school books is an early history of Grand Rapids written (in an impossibly neat hand) by Sowerby when he was in fourth grade. He writes, "...there was a large and prosperous village at the Rapids, and the valley was very beautiful, [the Ottawa tribe members] were attracted by the excellent hunting and fishing." Sowerby later attended Central High School as a member of the Class of 1912. Here, too, his life would have been filled with music, as the school's musical ensembles included an orchestra, a band, a Girls' Glee Club, a Boys' Glee Club, and even a Mandolin Club!

Even after leaving Grand Rapids, the River City was never far from his heart. Sowerby regularly wrote home to his family members and especially to his mother at her Innes Street home, which still stands, just around the corner from Martha's Vineyard. Postcards and letters sent from war-torn Europe reveal a young man eager to soothe his mother's worries with reports of the enjoyable (harmless) excursions to important churches in England and France. In a letter to his mother from France dated October 11, 1918, he noted that the "French people are very likeable and are very kind to Americans. Marching up from the boat, an old man came along and gave flowers to all the men he could—he seemed to enjoy doing it." The letter closes with the words "The war news we are now receiving is very fine; however, too much optimism over it doesn't pay." In a letter dated December 8, 1918, he writes to his mother and sister of the beauty of Paris, and of his intention, some day, to return to the city to study.

When Leo Sowerby died, his life as a Grand Raptidian, in a sense, came full circle. On October 19, 1968, a memorial service was held for Sowerby at the Washington (i.e., National) Cathedral—Sowerby had been very active in Washington as the Director of the College of Church Musicians. Directing the memorial service was none other than the Cathedral's organist and music director, Paul Callaway, who had left St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Grand Rapids twenty-nine years earlier in order to accept his new post in Washington.

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The Sowerby Archive

After Sowerby's death, his correspondence was given to St. Mark's Episcopal Church, where it remains to this day, safely stored in the church archives. Among the most important and fascinating items are numerous letters and postcards to his family, as well as many unpublished photographs, drawings, and school materials. Perhaps most interesting is an extensive correspondence between the eccentric Australian composer Percy Grainger and Sowerby, who, as a young man in his twenties, had sought out Grainger for advice. The correspondence begins formally enough ("My dear Mr. Sowerby" in 1916) but quickly evolved into a close and valued friendship ("My dear Leo" by 1917). In a letter from Manhattan dated October 13, 1916, Grainger, after offering advice on contacting publishers, noted: "Heard from Miss Cameron that you gave a stunning organ Recital [sic]. Much looking forward to seeing you in Grand Rapids, Mich. That will be great fun!"

And so it is that we, too, will take time to gather on October 20 to encounter a musician whose legacy owes so much to St. Mark's hallowed walls, and to the City of Grand Rapids. That will be great fun, indeed!



Leo Sowerby
playing piano at home



St. Mark's Episcopal Church

There is nothing to playing the organ. You only have to hit the right notes at the right time and the instrument plays itself.

- Johann Sebastian Bach

To play only what is written is the domain of science. To realize what is not written is the domain of art.

- Jean Langlais

OCTOBER PROGRAM WILL HONOR LEO SOWERBY

The year 1995 marked the centennial of the birth of Grand Rapids' and Michigan's most famous composer, Leo Sowerby. Although a civic committee was formed to honor its most prominent musical citizen, neither The St. Cecilia Music Society or our chapter of the AGO was successful in mounting a concert of his music. Nor was the Grand Rapids Symphony interested in presenting one of his symphonies or concertos. Perhaps Sowerby's long association with the church and church music dampened enthusiasm for a public concert of his music. The only local organization to honor the composer was the Grand Rapids Chamber Choir under Larry Biser, which performed Sowerby's cantata "The Canticle of the Sun" at the Grand Rapids Museum.

On Monday evening, October 20, in the church where Sowerby was baptized and sang as a choir boy, we are planning an event to rectify this oversight. At St. Mark's Episcopal Church at eight o'clock p.m. the Grand Rapids Choir of Men and Boys will sing several choral compositions under the direction of Scott Bosscher. Kenneth Bos will accompany them on the four-manual Walker organ. Three of our colleagues will play organ pieces by Sowerby. Jonathan Tuuk will play "Comes Autumn Time," his most well-known work for organ. Gregory Crowell will play his Wedding March. Bruce Klanderma has chosen Sowerby's most well-known hymn prelude named "Picardy," the tune of "Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence."

The composer's output of sacred solo songs for the church will also be represented on the program. John Scheid, local baritone admired for his roles in the productions of Opera Grand Rapids, will sing two psalm settings for baritone with piano or organ accompaniment. Peter Kurdziel will be his accompanist.

Our concert is open to the public free of charge. Please invite friends and family to this special event, and be sure to visit the placard dedicated to Leo Sowerby on the north wall of the church. In the St. Mark's Parish Hall will be a display of artifacts from the Sowerby archive of the church, organized by Gregory Crowell, Director of Music at St. Mark's.

We will meet in the Parish Hall of St. Mark's Church for punch at 6:30 p.m. and dinner at seven. If you do not receive a phone call asking for your reservation, please call Erroll Shewman at 456-9232.



Please see pages 6 & 7 for brief descriptions and the October 2014 issue of *The American Organist* or agohq.org for full details on each competition.

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

Park Church Grand Rapids Announces Great American Voices Concert Series

First (Park) Congregational Church will be bringing world-class singers to West Michigan as it kicks off its inaugural season of its new concert series, Great American Voices, in October. This first-of-its-kind series in West Michigan was created with the goal to open the church's doors to the community and bring superb vocal talent and music from a variety of different genres to Grand Rapids.

"Our church tagline states, 'no matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you're welcome here,' and we are proud to announce Great American Voices in that spirit of welcome, inclusion and community life," said Patrick Coyle, minister of music at First Park Church.

The concert series begins Oct. 25 with Liz & Ann Hampton Callaway, featuring Broadway, jazz and pop standards. A total of five concerts will take place in the series, including Michigan State University's Men's Glee Club, Candlelight Christmas, Where the Heart Is and Chanticleer.

"Park Church has a long history of excellent music and musicians, and we're thrilled to expand our concert offerings to include top-tier vocal artists of all styles," Coyle said. "In the inaugural season, we're looking forward to bringing in Broadway performers, choirs and the finest male vocal ensemble in the United States. Many of these talented musicians have not been heard in live performance in West Michigan."

Season subscriptions as well as individual concert tickets are available. Season subscriptions purchased by Oct. 25 receive 15 percent off. For more information about the concert series and ordering tickets, visit www.ParkChurchGR.org or call 616-459-3203.

COMPLETE CONCERT SCHEDULE

SATURDAY, OCT. 25, 2014 ~ SIBLING REVELRY, 8 p.m.

Ann Hampton Callaway and Liz Callaway

Broadway stars and dynamic sisters, Liz and Ann Hampton Callaway are teaming up again to bring Sibling Revelry for the first time ever. The award-winning show enjoyed a sold-out engagement in New York last summer and received rave reviews. This will be a rare full concert performance for fans of Broadway, jazz and pop standards. *\$29 in advance/\$34 at the door; students: \$19 in advance, \$24 at the door*

FRIDAY, NOV. 21, 2014 ~ MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY MEN'S GLEE CLUB, 8 p.m.

One of the finest Glee Clubs in the country, the MSU Men's Glee Club also is one of the oldest organizations on the campus. Performing a stirring mixture of traditional male choral literature, patriotic songs, spirituals and popular music, the Glee Club is a joy to hear and watch. *\$20 in advance/\$25 at the door; students: \$10 in advance, \$15 at the door*

SUNDAY, DEC. 14, 2014 ~ 97TH ANNUAL CANDLELIGHT CHRISTMAS, 3 p.m.

Brighten your holiday season with one of Grand Rapids' longest-running celebrations. Join more than 75 performers featuring Park Church's choirs, chamber orchestra, harp, bells and magnificent organ. Park's historic sanctuary is gloriously decorated for this year's edition, featuring the beloved carol sing and "The Seven Joys of Christmas," conducted by Dr. Patrick Coyle, with Principle Organist Stephen Smith and Harpist Phyllis Miner. *No tickets required; free-will offering.*



Park Congregational Church

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GREAT AMERICAN VOICES

SUNDAY, MARCH 15, 2015 ~ WHERE THE HEART IS, 3 p.m.

Benefitting Area Homeless Programs

The Chancel Choirs of Park Church and First United Methodist Church join the Chamber Choir of Grand Rapids harness the power of music to help meet the needs of our homeless neighbors. The first act features a variety of choral favorites. The second act is the regional premiere of Henry Mollicone's "The Beatitudo Mass: For the Homeless" for soprano and baritone soloists, a chorus of 120 singers and a chamber orchestra, directed by Eric Strand, Dr. Mark Webb and Dr. Patrick Coyle. Proceeds will benefit the Heartside Neighborhood Collaborative Project and Access of West Michigan. *No tickets required; donations requested.*

MONDAY, APRIL 13, 2015 ~ CHANTICLEER, 7:30 p.m.

Hailed by New Yorker magazine as "The world's reigning male chorus," the GRAMMY Award-winning vocal ensemble performs for the first time at Park Church. The stunning acoustics of the historic sanctuary are perfectly suited for an all-new a cappella program, featuring Chanticleer's lush signature sound.

ANNAMAE ROTMAN YOUNG ORGANIST COMPETITION

Eligibility – A contestant must be under 24 years of age as of August 1 of the competition year

Competition Date – April 20, 2015

Application Date – Postmarked by Feb. 20 of competition year

Eligibility – Resident of Kent County, MI or any county adjacent to Kent County and/or resident student attending a high school, college, or university in Kent County, MI or any county adjacent to Kent County (Ottawa, Muskegon, Newaygo, Montcalm, Ionia, Barry, and Allegan Counties)

First place winners of the competition are not eligible to compete in this competition again

Venue – Grand Rapids area pipe organ of high quality and versatility, varied from year to year

Registration Fee - \$30 (nonrefundable)

Repertoire – Two pieces of contrasting styles and representing different time periods and a hymn

Required selections:

Baroque style – J. S. Bach – Preludes and Fugues (can include the Eight Preludes and Fugues - Bach/Krebs), Trio Sonatas, and/or Chorale Preludes. Any combination of works by J. S. Bach for a minimum of 7 minutes.

A contrasting work of the contestant's choice – Examples are Brahms, Dupre, Widor, Franck, Hindemith, or others from the 19th or 20th century eras for a minimum of 7 minutes.

Hymn – To be selected from one of the hymn selections listed in the rules for the AGO/Quimby Competition listed on the AGO website (www.agohq.org) in Sept., 2014 (TAO- Oct., 2014)

– Hymn requirements include:

Introduction either improvised or published

First verse as written

Other verses as written, improvised or published free accompaniment but able to lead singing

The judges will consider the text of each verse as it relates to the musical interpretation of the hymn by the contestant. The audience will be invited to sing on each stanza.

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Three unmarked copies of each repertoire number and hymn introduction and free accompaniment will be required for the judges

Performance Time – 25 minutes maximum for all selections, hymn, and console preparation; memorization is not required and will not influence the judges' decisions

Awards – Cash prizes of \$1000 first place, \$500 second place, and \$250 for the best high school student or younger who does not win first or second prize

Judges – Three judges will be paid \$50 each for their services. The judges may be local but may not be nor have been a teacher of any of the contestants

2015 Venue – Calvin Christian Reformed Church, Grand Rapids, MI. on April 20 at 2:00 PM

Practice Details – Each contestant will work out practice times with the chapter coordinator and will be assigned memory levels. Each contestant should receive equal practice time, should not use the competition instrument regularly and should practice alone with a chapter mentor. A minimum of 2 hours practice time will be allowed. Page turners will be provided.

For competition details not covered in these rules, consult the AGO/Quimby competition rules.

Note: AGO/Quimby vs. Rotman competitions – Young organists are encouraged to enter either the AGO/Quimby competition for more advanced young organists or the Rotman competition for less advanced organists. If both competitions are entered, the repertoire including the hymn must be entirely different for each competition.

2015 Coordinators: Bruce Klanderma, bklanderma@aol.com, phone no. 616-974-9034

Joan Ringerwole, jringerwole@gmail.com, phone no. 616-669-9376



Calvin Christian Reformed Church

*700 Ethel Avenue, SE
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506*

*Aeolian-Skinner Organ
Three Manuals, 50 Ranks
Opus 1302, 1957*

2015 AGO Student Commissioning Project

Grants of \$1000 awarded to collaborative composer and organist pairs for the composition and performance of new works for the organ

Instructions for Composers

Eligibility: All applicants, composers and organists, must be enrolled as full- or part-time students at an accredited US college, university, or conservatory. There are no restrictions with regard to compositional style. Applicants need not be a member of the American Guild of Organists.

Application Procedures: Each composer and organist pair will submit one joint application. The following application materials must be mailed **in quadruplicate** to the address on the Application Form:

1. Completed Application Form, available at www.agohq.org/competitions/newmusic.html
2. Composers must submit one sample score demonstrating his or her best work in any genre.
3. Composers must also submit a statement describing the proposed work and expressing his or her interest in writing for the organ.
4. Organists must submit a CD sample recording no longer than twelve minutes in length, demonstrating his or her abilities. Repertoire performed may be in any style.

Deadlines: Application materials must be addressed to AGO Headquarters and postmarked on or before **October 15, 2014**. Grant winners will be announced before November 15, 2014.

Additional Details

- Two grants of \$1000 will be awarded each year to two composer and organist pairs. Each award will be split evenly between the composer and organist (\$500 each), half of which (\$250) will be presented upon selection for the award. The other half will be presented to both parties upon successful execution of the premiere, at which time the composer will submit the score and the organist will submit plans for two subsequent performances within six months.
- The premiere performance of the new work must be before June 1, 2015, with two subsequent performances completed before December 31, 2015. In the event of failure to submit the score and/or to complete the performances by the above deadlines the awarded funds must be repaid in full.
- Information regarding award winners, performances, and completed compositions will be provided on the AGO national webpage for New Music. Awarded composers will be given the option of posting their full compositions for free download from the website, or sample pages alongside contact information for interested parties to purchase scores directly from the composer.
- Please retain a copy of your complete application for your records. One copy of the commissioned piece (and application) will be retained by the AGO for archival purposes; all other applications will be destroyed.

AGO Committee on New Music

Eileen Hunt, Director
 Randall Harlow
 John Nuechterlein

OFFICIAL RULES GOVERNING THE 2015 AGO/QUIMBY REGIONAL COMPETITIONS FOR YOUNG ORGANISTS

The purpose of these competitions is to encourage younger organists to pursue excellence, to gain performance experience, and to receive recognition for their achievements. These competitions begin at the Chapter level and conclude at the seven Regional Conventions. The winner of each Regional Competition will be invited to perform as a Rising Star at the 2016 National Convention in Houston, Texas. The AGO/Quimby Regional Competitions are made possible by a generous grant from Michael Quimby, President, Quimby Pipe Organs Inc.

| | Chapter | Regional |
|--|--|---|
| Eligibility | A competitor must be under 24 years of age as of August 1, 2015. Membership in the AGO is not required. | Same |
| Competition Dates | The competition is to be held between February 15 and April 15, 2015. | The competition is to be held concurrent with the Regional Conventions in June/July 2015. |
| Competitor Application | Applications must be submitted online no later than January 15, 2015. Applications are available at Agohq.org. A competitor must enter only in the AGO region of either: • the school at which the competitor is currently enrolled OR • the competitor's permanent legal residence OR • the chapter of which the competitor has been a member for at least a year. | |
| Repertoire | Competitors will perform the following four selections: 1. A prelude (a toccata or fantasia is acceptable) and fugue or two contrasting movements of a trio sonata by Bach. BWV 582 is acceptable; BWV 553–560 and 572 are not acceptable. 2. A prescribed American work: Zachary Wadsworth (b. 1983): Variations on an Old American Tune (2010) (available for purchase at Zacharywadsworth.com) 3. Any one work, composed after 1750, of the competitor's choice (a movement of a larger work, such as a symphony, is acceptable) 4. Hymn—choose one Hyfrydol (Love Divine, All Loves Excelling) Cwm Rhondda (Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah) Ein Feste Burg (A Mighty Fortress) The competitor will introduce the hymn and <i>lead the audience in the singing</i> of all verses. At least the first stanza of the hymn must be played from the version downloaded from Agohq.org. Published or improvised arrangements may be used for the introduction and any subsequent verse, if desired. | Competitors will perform five selections: 1. Competitors will again perform the same three repertoire selections from the Chapter Round. 2. Also performed is an additional work of the competitor's choice. (When choosing this additional work, competitors should keep in mind the balance of the program.) 3. Hymn—choose one: Leoni (The God of Abraham Praise) Mit Freuden zart (Sing Praise to God Who Reigns Above) Aberystwyth (Jesus, Lover of My Soul) The competitor will introduce the hymn and <i>lead the audience in the singing</i> of all verses. At least the first stanza of the hymn must be played from the version downloaded from Agohq.org. Published or improvised arrangements may be used for the introduction and any subsequent verse, if desired. |
| Total Performance Time (three works + hymn) | The total performance time is not to exceed 40 minutes, including piston setting. | The total performance time is not to exceed 50 minutes, including piston setting. |
| Awards | The first-place winner is expected to compete in the Regional Competition. Chapter first-place winners receive free membership in the AGO for one year. Each Chapter is expected to make cash awards and to assist with expenses for traveling to the Regional Convention. Chapters are encouraged to present the winner in recital. | \$1,000 cash prize to first-place winner; \$500 cash prize to second-place winner. The first-place winner is to be presented in a 45-minute recital at the Regional Convention. All first-place winners will be invited to perform at the 2016 National Convention in Houston, Tex. |
| Official Registration Form and Official Rules | Available from AGO Headquarters, 475 Riverside Drive, Suite 1260, New York, NY 10115; phone: 212-870-2310; fax: 212-870-2163; email: info@agohq.org; website: Agohq.org. | NA |
| Registration Fee | \$50 (nonrefundable); payable online | NA |

National Competitions Committee

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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!