

THE WINDCHEST

OMAHA CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN GUILD OF ORGANISTS

AUGUST 2022



FROM THE DEAN

Back in the days of ancient Israel, King Saul would go into deep depression. The only thing that would restore his mood was the music that David played on his lyre. Time and time again, it appears that Saul's moodiness was relieved by David's music.

Sometimes we organists get caught up in making sure we are playing the right notes with the right rhythm with the right registrations and making sure the prelude ends at the right time. And sometimes we forget the emotional aspect of the music we are playing. Have you ever been uplifted by your own playing? Have you ever had someone come up to you and say that your music really lifted their spirits? Have you ever been uplifted by listening to others play music?

As we get ready to begin another fall season, let's make sure that our music is not only technically as good as possible, but that we play with spirit and even a bit of gusto. I ran across an interesting quote recently: "The best musicians aren't the ones who always play the fastest and loudest. They are the ones who know WHEN to play fast and loud, and WHEN NOT TO. They are the ones who play what the music calls for, are team players, and always make the audience feel something when they play."

The last weeks of summer might be a good time for all of us to assess our playing so that our congregations or audiences indeed feel something when we play.

Stephen R. Bartelt, Dean

SEPTEMBER PROGRAM: Saturday, September 10, 10:00 to 11:30 a.m. For some of us it has been years since we "took organ lessons." Several of our chapter members are currently teaching organ. Dr. Michael Bauer and Dr. Marie Rubis Bauer will update us on organ instruction at the college level. Kantor Zachary Zieschang is teaching a number of very young organ students and will introduce us to the methods he is using with these beginning students. Sally Hodges has discovered the value of using technology in her organ teaching and will update us on what she is currently doing. We meet at the All Saints Retreat Center behind All Saints Episcopal, 9302 Blondo.

OTHER FALL EVENTS

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 9

Our chapter member, Timothy Schreiber, will present a recital at St. Wenceslaus Catholic Church, 15353 Pacific Ave. at 3:00 p.m. Timothy is currently serving as Kantor at Risen Savior Lutheran Church, Basehor, Kansas, and finishing up his organ degree work at the University of Kansas. Every year, if possible, our chapter wants to feature a recital, and we are pleased to have one of our own chapter members as recitalist this year. Be sure to spread the word around town. We will need volunteers to help at the event, so you may well have the opportunity to help.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 12

Organists are often asked to work with small choirs, ensembles, duets, children, etc. Many times we need to serve both as accompanist and as director. Alexander Hoefling, interim choral director, Trinity Cathedral, presents a workshop on “Choral Techniques for Organists.” We will gain skills and confidence as we deal with these situations. Location is Trinity Episcopal Cathedral, 113 N. 18th St., 10:00 to 11:30 a.m.

SPEAKING OF CHORAL MUSIC . . .

Dr. Marie Rubis Bauer is making available excess choral music from the library at St. Cecilia Cathedral. Available titles include . . .

Ave Verum Corpus – Josquin des Pres (38 copies)
Inscription of Hope – Z. Randall Stroepe (170 copies)
I Will Arise and Go to Jesus – Donald Moore (66 copies)
Simple Gifts – John Leavitt (269 copies)
Cohan Finale – Mac Huff (4 copies)
I Will Sing My Song – Mary Donnelly (8 copies)
Cantate Deo – Handel (230 copies)
Panis Angelicus – Cesar Franck (40 copies)
Rejoice in the Lord Always – Anonymous (48 copies)
The Beatitudes – Arvo Part (23 copies)
Mass of Creation – Marty Haugen (200 copies)
Various assorted single copies of other pieces

If you or anyone at your church can make use of any of these, contact Marie at merubisbauer@archomaha.org or Julia Brockhouse at jabrockhouse@archomaha.org.

CONVENTION REPORT

Six members of our chapter attended the recent AGO National Convention: David Schack, Dr. Michael Bauer, Marie Meyers, Mark Kurtz, Claire Bushong, and Dr. J. Gordon Christensen. Enjoy a few pictures of them and selected comments from them about what they appreciated at the convention.

DAVID SCHACK

A workshop that I found particularly interesting was titled "Symphonic Organ Registration: 'Tricking' the Ear" and was given by Colin MacKnight. MacKnight made the case that his techniques could be incorporated in hymn playing as well as literature, assuming you have an organ equipped for this type of thing. He explained how he sets up pistons in order of volume, how he uses the expression pedals to mask the piston changes, and where in the score to best do the piston switching. He showed videos of himself making rapid fire piston changes to achieve smooth crescendos and diminuendos. A question from the audience: "How often should you use the crescendo pedal to help achieve these results?" His answer: "About once every three to five years."



CLAIRE BUSHONG

AGO conventions always offer excellent performances by well-known artists and new talent on a variety of instruments, more interesting workshops than anyone can fit into the schedule, the opportunity to catch up with people we don't see often, and a chance to meet new people. I hope you will be able to go to a national convention if you haven't already attended one.



MARK KURTZ

The American Guild of Organists (AGO) National Conventions are always educational and inspiring. While they all feature concerts, worship services, workshops, and resource centers, each one is unique in that it brings the perspectives of its local region and featured artists. One of the stand-outs for me from the 2022 convention in Seattle was the strong presence of two movements (one of them cultural and the other one aesthetic) that are not typically conjoined in other parts of the country: Social justice, and the historic instrument revival. Right from the get-go, at our first evening's opening concert, one of the leaders from the local AGO did a land acknowledgement (recognizing that we were gathering on the land of the Duwamish people, "who are still here.") At the closing concert in the same space at the end of the week, there was a premier of a new work for organ and narrator, "In Memoriam." The first words from the narrator were "George Floyd." Now, these progressive actions are not unknown at this moment in our culture, but it was amazing to me to see them happening as part of a concert that featured an instrument (the pipe organ) generally associated with music of the past, and in particular, on a mechanical-action instrument, which is built in the manner of pre-industrial age organ design.



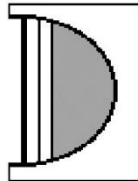
DR. J. GORDON CHRISTENSEN

I believe this convention was the 16th National AGO Convention I have attended. In many respects it was one of the most successful, carefully planned conventions with a terrific variety of performances, workshops and displays I have attended. Bus transportation to concerts and other events was well planned, always on schedule---and bus space was accessible and available for everyone when and where it was needed.

Choice of workshops? Again, terrific! Especially significant was a workshop presented by Dr. Michael Bauer: "Toward a Pedagogy of Organ Practice: Learning vs. Teaching." How do teachers impart to their students the understanding and skills related to practicing?" Among the answers: "(1) Making the distinction between teaching students how to learn, vs. teaching students how to play:" ". . .how to play" includes teaching aesthetics, beauty, artistry and spiritual meaning.



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Claire Roehrkasse Eason

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