



VOX OCEANA

NEWSLETTER OF THE RHODE ISLAND CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN GUILD OF ORGANISTS

VOLUME XLIII, NO. 2

FEBRUARY 2010

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Kathy Hart: 837-8873
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www.riago.org

www.agonewengland.blogspot.com

FROM THE DEAN

REFLECTIONS ON THE KING OF INSTRUMENTS

The organ is often called the “King of Instruments”, but few people know why or how it got to be so. The organ was originally considered a pagan instrument and was banned from sacred services. This would have been the Greek hydraulis or water organ used in worshipping the ancient Greek gods. Organology is, in fact, the study of musical instruments, from the term organ, which refers to ancient fertility ceremonies such as would be celebrated in temples to various gods, using the instruments that were eventually adopted by Western societies. It is generally considered that the large number of instruments mentioned in the psalms disappeared in worship after the destruction of the Second Temple by the Romans around the year 70, and some believe that instruments stopped being used even earlier than that.

Some scholars speculate that the first organs to be placed in a church occurred in Spain, a gift given to a conquering king during the crusades. A pair of organs placed on each side of the choir and facing each other with their horizontal trumpets arrayed like battle-spears of two opposing armies would celebrate the king’s victory both visually and aurally (the Spanish battle pieces) and also serve to remind both the assembly and the clerics who was in charge.

The choir was so named because it was the only group that was allowed to sit in a “chayre” (chair), which was also the Middle English word for choir. Like the dual organs, the singers would chant in “alternatim,” one side and then the other, the familiar verse and antiphon or call and response. Everyone else stood on a dirt floor.

The papal chapel had an acapella tradition, but many of the popes came from wealthy families who built for themselves lavish private chapels. Many of these chapels and their nearby churches had organs with elaborate carvings and pipework from some of the finest artists of the Renaissance. Many paintings depicted another instrument, often an orchestra of them played by the angels, which many believe was the primary instrument in use before the organ.

That instrument was the trombone, or more properly, its ancestor the sackbut. The German word for trombone is Posaune, but the earliest associations of that word were with the last trumpet, to be blown by the angel Gabriel in the last days. The elusive sound of the diapason resembles the sound of the earlier sackbut, which had a mellow tone and was not as “brassy” as the modern trombone. The idea of “God’s Trombones” still persists in the “shout” choirs, which began in Massachusetts and spread down the Eastern seaboard to the Deep South along the Southern Railway.

The oldest playable organ in the world is the organ at the Cathedral of Notre Dame de Valère in Sion, Switzerland, built in 1390. It has been recorded.

EVENTS & NOTICES

SPRING INTO OUR EXCITING UPCOMING EVENTS

Friday, February 26, 8:00 pm: Stephen Hamilton performs Marcel Dupré's *Le Chemin de la Croix* at the Cathedral of SS. Peter and Paul.

Sunday, April 25: Quimby Prize Winner **Christopher Gage** will play a recital at The First Baptist Church in America.

Save **May 23** for the Annual Dinner. Details to be announced.

What's Missing Here? Is your event listed? Are you taking advantage of our email blasts which go out to 1,000 potential audience members beyond our guild membership?

FROM OUR FRIENDS

The Merrimack Valley Chapter AGO is sponsoring a mini-convention on Saturday February 27, which will feature James Busby ("A Fresh Look at Accompanying"), Dr. Jay D. Lane ("A Unified Sound from your Volunteer Choir"), Barbara Owen ("The 'Boston Classicists' and their Organ Music"), and Wolé Àlàdé ("African Influences in African-American Music"). For further information, please call or e-mail Barbara Owen 978-465-2068 owenbar@juno.com or Ruth Bowers 978-922-8137 Ruth.Bowers@comcast.net

Portland AGO Chapter presents a Master Class with Sophie-Véronique Cauchefér-Choplin on April 12 from 7:00-8:30pm at St. Luke's Cathedral, Portland.

GEARING UP FOR NATIONAL CONVENTION

2010 marks the 100th anniversary of the AGO District of Columbia Chapter, and the Convention will be a celebration in very grand style from July 4-8. The Convention program features 25 organs, 17 renowned recitalists, 14 choral and instrumental ensembles, 74 workshops, 8 worship services and 12 commissioned works, and still plenty of time to visit exhibits and to socialize with colleagues old and new! Visit the convention website and register early at <http://www.ago2010.org/>

STUDENTS PRESENT KEYBOARD FESTIVAL

Each year, my piano students take field trips to play on other keyboard instruments. David Morse has invited them to explore the big Renaissance Allen organ at Mathewson Street United Methodist Church. They have played on instruments at Glen Guittari's Harpsichord Clearing House in Rehoboth—clavichords, virginals and spinets, fortepianos, and single and double manual harpsichords.

This year, inspired by RIAGO's Organ Festival, I decided my music students would present their own keyboard festival. On Sunday, February 7, twenty-five students, ages 5 through 18, will perform music for piano, organ and harpsichord at Mathewson Street United Methodist Church. RIAGO members are cordially invited to attend. There will be two sessions, each about an hour long, at 2:00 and 4:30.

Glen Guittari's whole-hearted support for the keyboard festival resulted in a harpsichord being moved to my studio for students to practice on during January. We scheduled rehearsal times for students playing organ pieces on Saturday afternoons at Mathewson Street Church.

Parents are enthusiastic and willing to pay a higher recital fee to help move and tune instruments, make a donation to the church, and give David something for all his help.

Half of the participants are preparing organ pieces. They will perform music adapted from piano pieces (including use of the pedals) as well as Bach Preludes and Fugues. Original harpsichord music for beginners and more advanced harpsichord music by Couperin and Domenico Scarlatti is on the program. The audience will hear piano music by Chopin, Mendelssohn and Beethoven among others.

I hope that other musicians will offer opportunities such as this in their churches. Indeed, this is the type of project that RIAGO could have a big success sponsoring in collaboration with area piano teachers. A keyboard festival such as this could become a regular event to introduce young musicians to the wonderful variety of musical expression possible on different keyboard instruments. It would increase interest in the organ and in organ study among both youngsters and their parents.

—Nancy Nicholson

RIAGO PRESENTS STEPHEN HAMILTON, ORGANIST

Marcel Dupré's *Le Chemin de la Croix* (1932)
with narrated poetry written by
Paul Claudel: *Le Chemin de la Croix* (1911)

The Cathedral of St. Peter and St. Paul
Friday, February 26 at 8:00 pm

THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS

THE TRADITION

The Stations of the Cross were established throughout Europe in the Middle Ages at the initiative of the Franciscans. They consist of a series of fourteen pictures, carvings, or in the case of St. Joseph Cathedral, mosaics, designed for devotional purposes, depicting incidents of the Passion and Death of our Lord. Usually they are arranged around the walls of the sanctuary, or as a series of "shrines" in a garden or similar enclosure. It has been the custom of Catholics, especially during Lent and Holy Week to include in their devotions the following of the Way of the Cross, using the Stations as aids to contemplation and meditation.

THE POETRY

Paul Claudel (1868-1955), French poet, dramatist, essayist and theologian wrote "Le Chemin de la Croix" in 1911. In the late 1930's in his role as French Ambassador to the United States, he made several visits to Louisiana, in particular to St. Martinville and New Orleans. The poetry, using the framework of the "Stations of the Cross," is an extended reflection upon the Passion. In recalling the emotional character of each station, Claudel infuses the human anguish of Jesus with rich spiritual meaning and brings us face to face with the suffering of the Word Become Flesh.

THE MUSIC

The first sketch of "Le Chemin de la Croix" was conceived and realized in the form of an extensive improvisation by Marcel Dupré (internationally renowned both for his written compositions and extemporaneous performances) at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Brussels on February 13, 1931. Over the following year, the fourteen musical meditations were written down from recollection by the composer and published by Durand.

Stephen Hamilton, virtuoso concert organist, has long been prominent on the American organ scene. The New York Times recently wrote "Hamilton...obviously knew the instrument's sonorous capabilities and brought them powerfully to bear in a rousing account." Stephen Hamilton is Minister of Music at the historic Church of the Holy Trinity (Episcopal), in New York City, where he conducts the Holy Trinity Choir and is Artistic Director of Music at Holy Trinity. The New York Times acknowledges that Hamilton's concert series "is an important venue for weekend presentations." Highlights of Hamilton's career include the premiere performance of Kenton Coe's *Concerto for*



Organ, Strings and Percussion in France, a performance with the Detroit Symphony with conductor David Zinman, and appearances with numerous regional orchestras. Hamilton has been heard in hundreds of solo recitals and on the nationally broadcast radio program *Pipedreams* as well as WETS-FM's *Pipes, Pedals and Pistons*. His compact disc release of Marcel Dupré's *Le Chemin de la Croix* met with exceptional reviews from a number of magazines and trade journals including *The American Organist* and *The American Record Guide*.

In addition to his duties at the Church of the Holy Trinity, Dr. Hamilton is a member of the artist faculties at Hunter and Queens Colleges, and teaches organ in the pre-college division of the Manhattan School of Music. Dr. Hamilton is in demand as a clinician for master classes and workshops, frequently lecturing on issues related to church music as well as organ teaching, playing and interpretation. He presented classes on various aspects of church music at the University of the South in the summer of 2001 and has presented church music repertoire classes for the 2002, 2004 and 2006 National Conventions of the American Guild of Organists in Philadelphia, Los Angeles and Chicago.

Dr. Stephen Hamilton was Dean of the New York City Chapter of the American Guild of Organists from 1998-2004, is President of the Alain Association in America, and served as the program chairman of the Region II AGO convention held in New York City in July 2007. www.stephenjonhamilton.com

PLACEMENT LISTING

Contact Howard Phelps (821-8475) for more information.

Emmanuel Lutheran Church (ELCA) 11/09
24 Berwick Street, Norwood, MA 02062
The Rev. Edward Saling: 781-762-9457; 781-762-9057
O/D \$24-25/hr (20 hrs) Wicks 2 Man 12 Ranks

Calvin Presbyterian Church 12/09
126 Angell Road, Cumberland, RI 02864
Pam Marcil: 401-333-0355
O/D \$10000 Moller 2 man 7 rks

MEMBER NEWS

Sherry Newman is now at St. Matthew's Episcopal Church in Jamestown. Please add her to your directory: 29 Brook Drive Hope Valley RI 03832; 539-0551; voxnewmana@cox.net

CHORISTER FOR A DAY

On Sunday, February 14, boy treble choristers are invited, with their parents, to join us for an afternoon at Saint Thomas Choir School, 202 W. 58th St., New York City. Visiting boys will rehearse and sit in the choir stalls with the Saint Thomas Choir of men and boys for evensong.

Guests are invited to join the Saint Thomas choristers and their families for lunch at 1:00 PM (following the 11:00 AM Sung Eucharist). Teachers will host visitors in the classrooms to answer questions about the curriculum and student life.

For further information contact Ruth Cobb, rcobb@choirschool.org or 212-247-3311.

AVERY PIANO RECITAL HALL

... is available for your recital. Pianos are concert prepared before each recital, seating for 75, kitchen facility, air conditioned, convenient times available, wheelchair accessible. Reserve your recital date now while dates are still available. All for just \$200.00! Call 1-888-AVERY-88 for details. Avery Pianos promotes RIAGO events.

SUBSTITUTE LISTINGS

REPORT ANY CHANGES TO HOWARD PHELPS

AVAILABLE SUNDAYS

Clarke, Margaret: 401-726-4128 (all)
Gage, Christopher: 401-632-1863 (all)
Larkin, Brian: 401-272-8318 (all)
Lide, Mary Jane: 401-714-0011 (all)
Norton-Jackson, Diana: 401-783-0402 (no RC/weddings, \$150 min.)
Phelps, Howard: 401-821-8475 (no RC)
Tagen, Julia L.: 401-885-7438 (all)
Westhaver, Verna: 401-683-2636 (all, interim)
Wiant, William: 401-683-3178 (all, weddings/funerals)
Zimmermann, Amy: 301-529-0136 (all)

NOT AVAILABLE SUNDAYS

Allard, Jeff: 401-447-9035 (funerals)
Boucher, Paul: 401-837-4802 (weddings, funerals, including RC)
Bush, Brink: 401-245-4065 (weddings, funerals)
Cienniwa, Paul: 508-676-8483 (\$150 min)
Conboy, Lois: 401-658-3838
Hart, Kathy: 401-837-8873 (weddings, funerals, accompanist)
Johnson, Mark D.: 401-996-9796 (no weddings; \$150 funerals)
Martorella, Philip: 401-885-3431 (weddings, funerals)
Morse, David: 401-486-0244 (no Sunday AM)
Nicholson, Nancy: 401-521-9097 (no Sunday AM)
Nolan, Robert: 401-884-7172 (weddings, funerals, non-Sun. services)
Rankin, Jane B.: 401-884-0669 (funerals)
Sobaje, Martha: 401-626-0099 (weddings, funerals, no RC)
Tagen, Julie: 401-885-7438 (weddings, funerals)
Teitelbaum, Kajsa: 401-965-3304 (Org./Soloist-weddings, funerals)
Yoreo, Dorothy: 401-246-1223 (all)

MUSIC OF RHODE ISLAND

The Rhode Island Pipes CD features Rhode Island organists playing noteworthy Rhode Island instruments. Only \$18.50! See performer and venue details online at www.riago.org. Contact Julie Tagen to order.

SUBMISSIONS

Deadline: 20th of each month
Submissions: Send Word or Text files to aallard@ccri.edu or to Althea Allard, 166 Suffolk Ave., Pawtucket, RI 02861.
Advertising: Word doc, PDF (print ready), JPG (high resolution), TIFF, or EPS. All files should be grayscale at 300 dpi resolution.
Email to camacphee@gmail.com.

ADVERTISING RATES

1/4-page ad (3.5"W x 5"H): \$18
1/8-page ad (3.5"W x 2.5"H): \$10
Flyers you provide (for RIAGO members): \$10
Make checks out to RIAGO and mail to Althea Allard by the 20th.